

LEGENDS OF THE WIRELESS PIONEERS

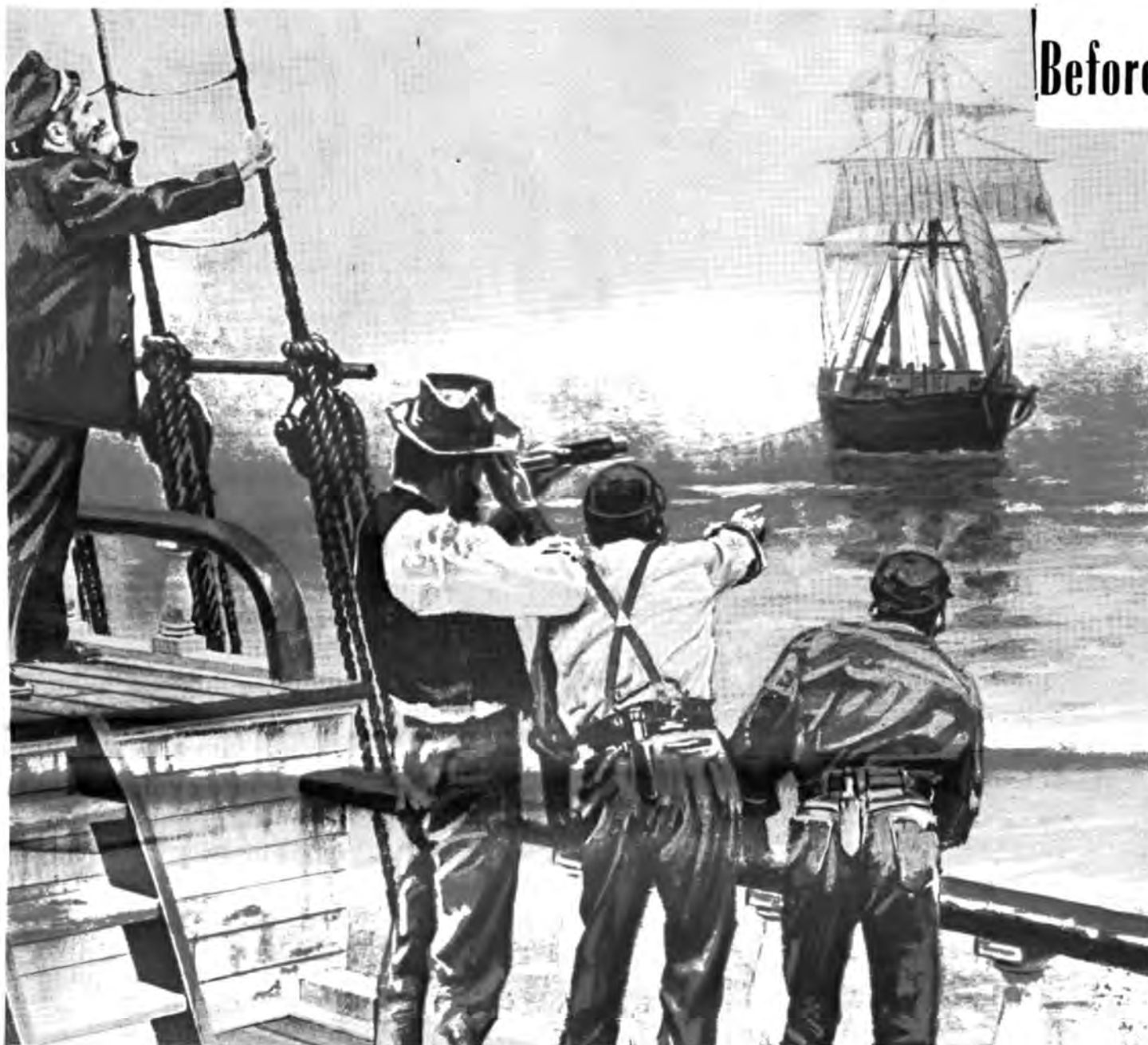


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"PQ - 17" EDITION

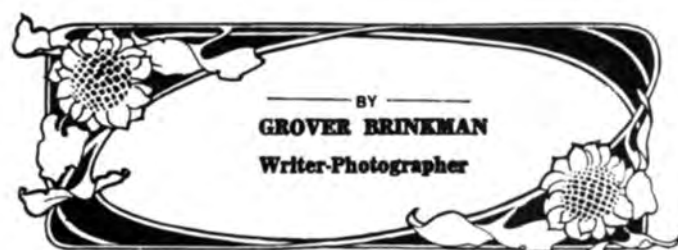


Before Days of the Wireless

The "MARY CELESTE" is spotted drifting aimlessly. Though its crew is missing, everything on board appears 'ship-shape'. What happened? The mystery, dating from 1872 remains unsolved. This is a copy of one of many oil paintings, down through the years taken by Author Grover Brinkman, that depicts the scene.



What Happened to the 'Mary Celeste'?



The legend of the lost Atlantis appears to be fable, but the dark abysses of the Atlantic are still as mysterious today as they were back in 1872 when the mystery of the "Mary Celeste" was spawned.

This was no dramatized incident of the Bermuda Triangle, yet after more than a century, the bizarre story of this wooden ship still amazes all who have studied the mystery.

Vision a ghost ship floundering aimlessly in mid-Atlantic. A sword lying under the captain's berth. The ship's log open in the mate's cabin. The compass and running rigging destroyed. The cargo of 1,700 barrels of alcohol still intact, with the exception of eight leaking barrels. More than three feet of water in the hold. The ship's small boat gone, and all eight crew members and two passengers, one the captain's two-year-old daughter, missing.

This was the baffling discovery made some 400 miles off the Azores by the British vessel, "Dei Gratia," on December 4, 1872.

The derelict ship, yawing and under very short canvas, was the ill-fated brigantine "Mary Celeste." Over the past nine decades, hundreds of conjectures, rumors and theories have arisen concerning the fate of the Mary Celeste's crew. Yet to this date, the disappearance of the ten people remains one of the sea's classic mysteries.

The Mary Celeste left New York harbor on November 7, 1872. The records giving this fact also note that during the closing months of 1872, the Atlantic Ocean was unusually tempestuous. Very heavy seas and winds of gale force buffeted ships unmercifully.

Captained by Benjamin S. Briggs, the Mary Celeste's destination was Genoa, Italy. Aboard were the Captain's wife, Sarah Elizabeth, and their infant daughter, Sophia Matilda.

For almost a month the 282-ton Mary Celeste was out of touch with civilization when it was sighted apparently in distress by the Dei Gratia.

Viewing the derelict ship through his spyglass, Captain David Morehouse of the Dei Gratia saw only a deck deserted of life. The Dei Gratia pulled near the drifting Mary Celeste and Morehouse "spoke" to her. When he received no response to his repeated shouts, Morehouse ordered two of his crew to board the brigantine.

The boarding crew stepped into a bone-chilling mystery. Not a soul was aboard. The captain's chronometer, sextant, navigation book, ship's register and other papers were missing.

Three and one-half feet of water was in the hold. The forward house was full of water, and tons of water were between decks. Two of the Mary Celeste's sails had been blown away along with some of the rigging.

(Continued on page 30)

Recording the Early History & Development of the Wireless



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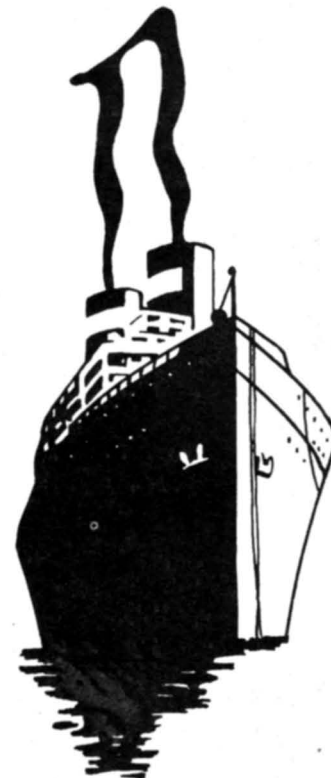
Welcome Aboard !

Greetings to all New Members who have been piped aboard since the last issue of SPARKS JOURNAL. We welcome you and hope that you will find many of your old friends (and new ones too) among the Society's 3350 plus members.

We hope you will participate in our activities ! PARTICIPATE is a good word. It helps you enjoy the Society and the Society benefits from your efforts whether it be attendance at organization reunions and meetings or furnishing material and memorabilia for our use and reference and stories of your experiences for publication. You are in position to 'join our team' in doing some good 'public relations' work in spreading the good word about our organization and what it stands for.

Our Membership Chairman - John N. Elwood feels that our best recruiters are our own members. They are in position to tell their eligible friends about the Society on a 'first-hand' basis or eyeball- QSO. The uninhibited recommendations of members have been highly successful in building membership which as we all know is the 'life blood' of any organization. To make it really rewarding we have agreed to mark "DUES PAID" for the coming year for any member recruiting a minimum of 5 new members, showing you as sponsor on the application received during any calendar year. This is our way of thanking you for helping us to increase the Society's membership. Not only will you help the Society but in the process I am sure you will make many friends who will 'thank you' for telling them about our Society. We do have a wonderful organization of very dedicated officers and members. You will enjoy them all.

Fraternally,



OLD SHIPMATE UNLISTED? URGE HIM TO JOIN

THE OLD INTERCITY RADIO-TELEGRAPH COMPANY

In response to inquiry from Roy Closs (801-SGP) an outline is given of the history of INTERCITY RADIO-TELEGRAPH COMPANY.

This Company was organized in 1923 as an Ohio corporation with Mr. Emil J. Simon as president. Mr. Simon was a radio-telegraph apparatus manufacturer during WW I, producing several models of ship spark transmitters for the U.S. Navy. He also pioneered in the production and installation of spark transmitters for military aircraft, which were in such great demand at the time.

The first I.R.T.Co. station was established as WTK in the Hotel Cleveland, Cleveland, Ohio. This station employed Simon transmitters converted to 2 kw for shore-to-ship service and for relay purposes on long wave to WHT in Rogers City, Michigan, and to and from ships on the upper Lakes. During the latter part of 1923, Intercity began installing spark transmitters and single-tube (detector only) receivers. Before that time only a very few ships on the Great Lakes were equipped with radio; within two years I.R.T. had installed radio apparatus in about 50 vessels, mostly coal and iron-ore carriers.

The Company continued to equip many ships in the following years. The shore-station system was also expanded with installations at WME, Duluth, Minnesota; WSK, Sheboygan, Wisconsin; WDR, Detroit, Michigan; and WBL, Buffalo, New York.

Intercity also ventured into long-wave operation (1760 meters) with point-to-point service, handling traffic for industrial and commercial businesses. Radio-telegraph was later supplemented with Teletype in additional offices located in Columbus, Ohio and South Bend, Indiana, in addition to the marine stations listed above.

In 1927, after two years of intense experimental work, Intercity developed and manufactured a marine radio direction finder for the Great Lakes ships; approximately 65 of these instruments were installed during the next several years. This instrument was and still is a most valuable aid for marine navigation in view of the prevalent fog and snow conditions on the Lakes.

Because it was necessary to install and service communication equipment including radio direction finders, etc., an organization was set up to provide this service on a 24-hour basis at all ports between Duluth and Buffalo. This provided an excellent opportunity to develop a close relationship among the manufacturing and station offices, and the ship personnel. This was, of course, beneficial in promoting sales. The Company's motto was based on an old business adage: "No equipment is any better than the service provided."

Intercity progressed quite well until the October 1929 stock market crash, and early in 1930 financial problems caused it to be placed in receivership. The Receiver appointed me to manage and operate the Marine Division, but the point-to-point service was dropped. We continued to operate for about two years when the Receiver decided to terminate the Company altogether.

Immediately after its closing I organized, with the help of the vessel operators, the Marine Equipment Company, Inc., which continued the installation and service of their equipment for about eight years, when radiotelephone replaced ship radiotelegraph and operators. Marine Instrument Co. continued with radio direction finders, multi-station ship intercom, engine-order telegraph systems and marine electrical work until my retirement in 1964.

After a short period I was called to the Marine Dept. of Raytheon Company in Cleveland, Ohio, where I spent the next five years, after which I retired for good.

73s to all.--Clarence C. Gielow
2256-SGP
5004 N.W. 51st Street
Tamarac FL 33319

REPORT FROM HALIFAX RADIO VCS

Paul Du Mesnil (M-2557) is happy to report that at Halifax Radio/VCS their CW traffic figures keep increasing every month. Now all foreign fishing vessels operating within 200 miles off the east coast of Canada must report daily their positions, size of catch, intentions for next 24 hours, etc., in the form of a commercial full-rate message thru their Canadian agents to the Fisheries Dept. At least 95% of foreign trawlers carry one or more RO's, sometimes with only a Special ticket instead of the usual minimum 2nd Class for cargo vessels. These vessels send all their traffic in CW, so much so that with this added traffic the station received almost 5000 fullrate msgs and sent 1800 full-rate ones to ships. Also, because the station is Coast Guard, although handling commercial traffic as well, unlike in the U.S., they received about 4000 free-of-charge msgs and sent more than 2500. This DH traffic is made up of OBS, AMVERS, GB (Govt.business) and ECARG (marine traffic centre which issues clearances for ships to enter Canadian territorial waters).

Recording Wireless History for Posterity

STATIC ROOM LOG OF THE WIRELESS PIONEERS



Edited by Fred Rosebury

The DH msgs sent to ships are made up of requests for info on the part of ECAREG CANADA and traffic clearances from them to ships.... The station has just been fitted (as of 10/78) with radio-telex but not too many of the ops. at VCS are enthusiastic about it. It is used very little so far. Ninety pct of their traffic is handled in CW, the rest in R-T to and from small coastal vessels. There are 32 ops and all have to be able to operate CW circuits (5 by day, 5 evenings, 2 at night); R-T circuits: 2 by day, 1F and HF, 2 evenings, 1 at night-and sometimes act as supervisor: a very busy station indeed.

NEWS FROM IRELAND

BASIN VIEW, TRALEE, COUNTY KERRY, SOUTHWEST IRELAND, 7 Feb. 1979.

We have been having some unusually bad weather here just as they have had in the U.K. and in Europe. The Russians report temperatures of minus 40°C (-40°F) and lower in some parts of Siberia! It has not been quite as bad here because we get a bit of the Gulf Stream just off shore.

I now have a small station on the air here with which I have worked a number of stations in the USA and in other areas. Most of my activity is on 15 meters (20 mc)(21.07 mc on CW only), and I monitor 21.055 often to pick up any SOWP stations who would like to add Ireland to their countries worked, or just to chew the rag.

Have given up on 20 meters (15 mc) because of the very bad QRM from Europe; they seem to skip over pretty well on 15 meters.

My schedule for Stateside is around 1600-2200 GMT. Am in contact with some West Coast stations almost every day.

—Roy J. Fleming (2398-P/E14DL-Ireland/
K6DQD...Home QTH=1921 Grand Avenue,
Redondo Beach CA 90278.

(Roy says he will be home soon to attend one of the SOWP meetings--Ed.)

DANGEROUS CRIMINAL AT LARGE

A reward is being offered for information leading to the arrest and conviction of EDDY CURRENT, charged with INDUCTION of an 18 year old COIL named MILLIE EHNRY, who was found robbed of valuable JOULES.

This UNRECTIFIED criminal is armed with a CARBON ROD and escaped from a WESTON CELL, where he had been clamped in IONS. His escape had been planned in THREE PHASES. First he FUSED the ELECTROLYTICS, then climbed through an open GRID despite the IMPEDANCE of the warden and finally jumped to GROUND near a MAGNETIC FIELD. He has been missing SINCE FARADY. WATT seems most likely is that he stole an AC MOTOR of low CAPACITY and is expected to change it for a MEGACYCLE rather than return OHM by a SHORT CIRCUIT. (From St. Paul, Minn.)

GROUND WAVE and
DBARA GROUND WAVE)
FLORIDA SKIP, Mar. 1978 / 5



BAD ACCIDENT—HAPPY ENDING



by Fred Rosebury

The SS Manatawny (KDFM) was originally built as a dry cargo carrier at Hog Island, Pa. during WWI. When the war was over and there was a much bigger demand for oil tankers than for freighters, the USSB, owners of the vessel, put out requests for bids to have the Manatawny and maybe several sister ships converted into tankers. The Baltimore Shipbuilding and Drydock Co. at Curtis Bay near Baltimore won the contract for the Manatawny, and the work was done in several months. For whatever reasons, the USSB reneged on the deal and so the BS&D Co. legally seized the ship for nonpayment and decided to operate it themselves, creating a company called the "Steamship Manatawny, Inc."

I joined the Manatawny as sole radioman on June 21, 1924 and made 25 voyages in her between that date and November, 1925. Nineteen of the voyages were between Marcus Hook, Pa. and Aransas Pass, Tex. on a charter with the Sun Oil Co. Some of the other oil voyages between various Gulf ports and Baltimore, Tiverton, R.I., and New York, were with Sinclair Oil Co. The last two voyages I made in the Manatawny were interesting ones in which she carried molasses from several places in the West Indies to New Orleans and New York.

On one of the Aransas Pass-Marcus Hook trips, the Manatawny was in a collision in the Delaware River. We had left Aransas Pass on December 27, 1924, with about 50,000 barrels of high-grade Texas crude, arriving off Cape May, N.J. early in the morning of January 4, 1925, where a pilot came aboard. The weather was cold and foggy. After a slow trip up the Delaware River in thickening fog, it was decided, about 9 a.m. to anchor as the visibility was almost zero. The ship got under way again when the fog lifted a bit about 4 p.m. There was some shipping moving on the river. As the Manatawny was rounding the bend near Reedy Island we saw coming down river a large British cargo vessel, the SS Nevisian, which was apparently in ballast or without cargo and rather high in the water. The Manatawny gave the signal to pass on the port side and our pilot gave the order to steer to starboard, which is what the Nevisian did also. But although the Manatawny's helm was hard over to starboard the rudder did not respond!

The Manatawny kept sheering acutely to port. Realizing that something had gone wrong with our steering gear, the pilot grabbed the whistle cord and frantically pulled the danger signal several times, but it was too late.

We collided with a sickening jar. The Nevisian had just started to cross our bows when the impact took place. We could see the heavy steel plates of the British ship flying apart as though they were tissue paper.

The Nevisian was moving at a moderate speed when we struck her, at which moment our engines were already going full astern, but the Manatawny's headway was too great to be checked in such a short space. The pilot of the Nevisian had the presence of mind to continue going after the Manatawny backed out, which occurred in a matter of seconds. The Nevisian had a hole in her as big as a house and was no doubt leaking badly because the Manatawny was deep loaded. Our ship had not been very badly damaged. There was some ice in the river, not as much as in that famous painting of George Washington crossing it (and unwisely standing up in the boat), but the water looked uncomfortably cold.

Our Captain S.F. Millikan ordered all hands to don their life jackets. There was an exchange of radio messages between the two ships and a notification to Brooklyn Navy Yard (NAH). It seems that just about the



Tanker SS MANATAWNY at Aransas Pass, Texas - 1924

same time the tanker William Rockefeller had gone aground off the Florida coast and so much SOS traffic was cluttering up the air that our accident seemed minor and got a bit lost in the shuffle; the Navy operator at NAH must have been somewhat confused.

The pilot of the Nevisian beached her on a sandspit; she seemed to be in no immediate danger of sinking. In our exchange of messages the British ship reported they were "badly holed forward, no one injured," and I told them, with advice from our skipper that we had some damage in the forepeak, etc. but no injuries to personnel. Brooklyn Navy Yard halted all radio communication for more than an hour, although neither I nor the Nevisian radioman had sent out an SOS as such. I gave NAH a brief account of the collision, dictated by Capt. Millikan, and said that neither ship appeared to be in danger and no one was hurt.

I did all this with an antenna that had partly come down about our ears. At the impact, our foremast was buckled forward because of the pull of the forestay cable, and the four-wire antenna got stretched a little too much. I had quickly noted that one wire was still holding clear; I went out and cut the other three before using the transmitter (Navy type, 2 kw. quenched-gap SE1205A). That one-wire antenna was quite adequate to do what I had to do.

The slight settling of the Manatawny by the head was hardly noticeable. It was found on inspection that our forepeak was filled with river water (not drinkable, even in those days) but the collision bulkhead was watertight and holding. When it was determined that the Nevisian was in no immediate danger, the Manatawny got under way again.

Our engineers discovered that a small pin, worth maybe less than fifty cents, had either fallen out or got sheared off in some vital part of the steering engine; they were able to make a quick repair.

We had to anchor again a little further up river because the fog closed in worse than before. A little after midnight Captain Millikan told me to turn in; I would be called if necessary. On going below for a bit of night lunch before I hit the sack I made note of the fact that a devil-may-care poker game was in progress in the saloon: one would never suspect that an accident, which could certainly have been serious if it had happened in deep water, had occurred only a few hours before.

We anchored off the oil terminal at Marcus Hook early the next morning to await a discharge berth. There was no further incident. About 9 a.m. the Nevisian passed slowly upriver toward the Sun shipyards near Philadelphia. She was assisted by four tugs and was far down in the water but keeping afloat with some sort of pontoons. The rent in her side was not visible as it was on the side away from us, but she looked crippled, with her bows almost down to the waterline and a heavy list to starboard. Captain Millikan blew a signal and she answered in a cheerful enough fashion. All in the day's work!

One strange and unexplained result of the collision was that the Manatawny's fo'c'stle deck was found to be littered with chicken feathers and other curious trash as though we had scooped a rubbish heap out of the Nevisian's innards.

— Fred Rosebury 1570-SGP



SHIP AHOY!

Long before the birth of Nelson
And his deeds of derring-do,
Man had always been commander
And the captain of his crew.

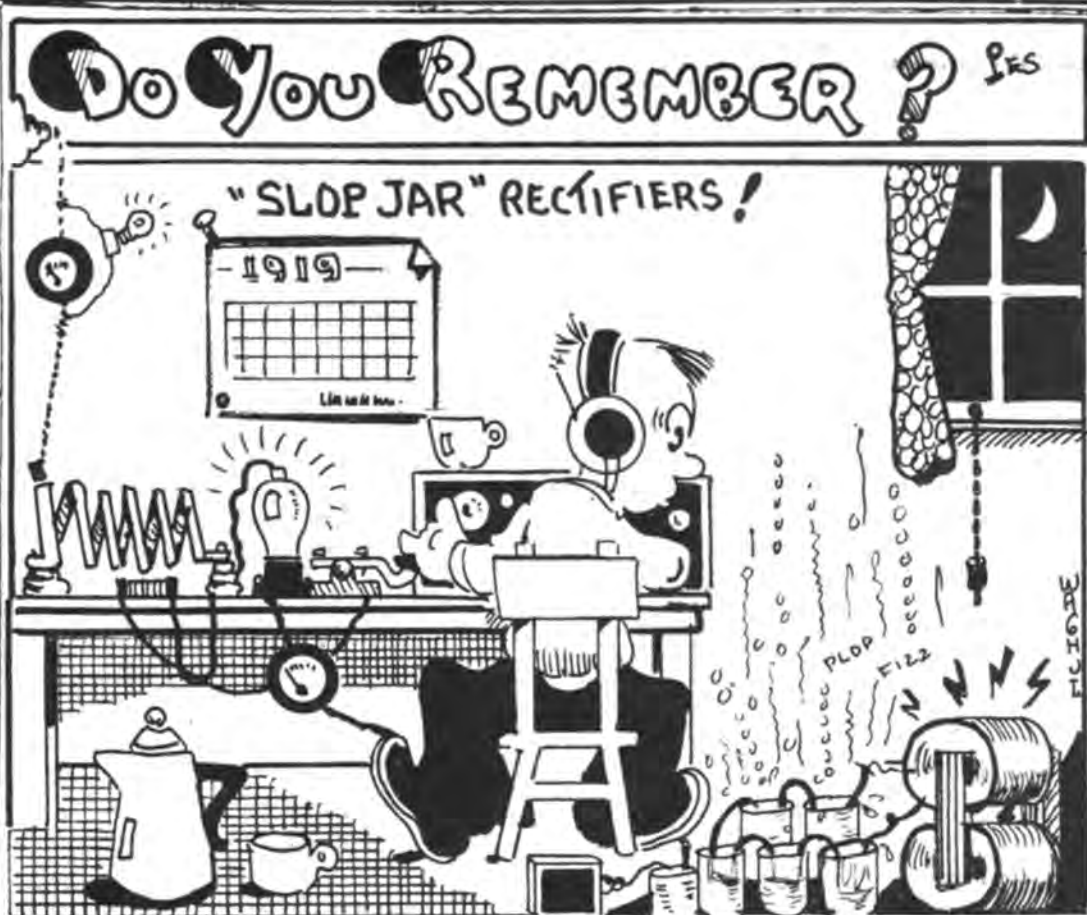
But this style of life is changing
And, in turn, we must submit
That the female of the species
Has a rightful claim to it.

But who could conceive a pirate
As a female full of charm,
Swing a cutlass on a poopdeck
In a manner meant to harm?

Or to view with sad conjecture
An entry in the log
Stating mini-skirted seamen
Fought for extra tots of grog.

Though garnished by their telling,
Man's exploits of the sea
Will not match woman's version
Of her conquest yet to be.

--Henry Leahy

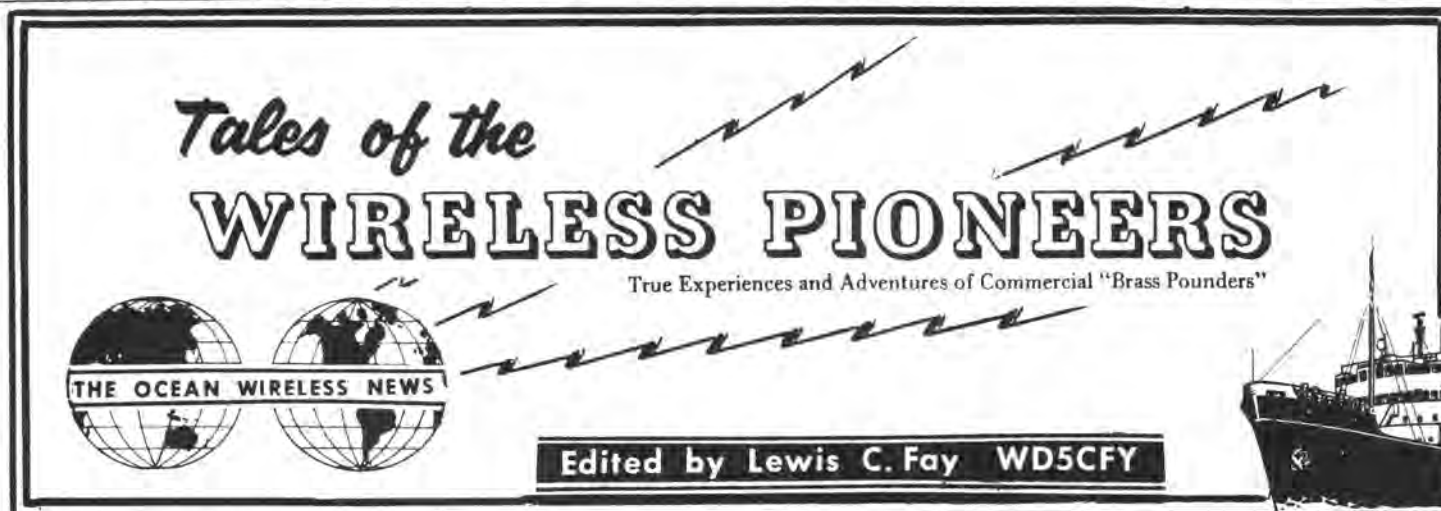


FROM DER AINCHUNT MARRINUR#

"MY typist has gone on hir holiday
My typst has gokn on a spree,
Mx typish hap pone on hyr haliduy,
O gring bacq md hypist to me.
Bling bac/ ok \$bring back
Oh bynk b4ck my pipisth to mi tu mo.
Brung bicq o scling 8ack
Oh blynk ba"l mg tpoys/ tp m? O demn--"

PS: She is back ! OH HIPPY DAY





DEATH OF A NOBLE BRASS-POUNDING TRADITION

END OF AN ERA

By Geoffrey H. Lloyd, SGP-428

Steamship agencies in all Hawaii screamed their heads off when KHK, the last commercially-owned wireless station in Hawaii, closed on April 27, 1978.

But their screams came too late! Due to advances in electronics, KHK's owners, R.C.A. Global Communications, had declared the station redundant several years before; but sustained opposition from involved interests delayed closure.

Joining in a futile, last-minute howl to keep the station open were the immensely numerous Japanese (Nesei) fishing vessels, which depend on wireless communication for their markets, and the larger companies like Matson.

Oddly, the strongest objection to closure came from the Hawaiian Telephone Company, which depended on KHK's high-seas radio-telephone transmitter KQM. The phone company wasn't ready for KHK to close, because it had no high-seas transmitter.

But KHK closed anyway -- and brought a noble brass-pounding era to an end!

I first heard KHK in October, 1914, while I was crossing the Pacific from Yokohama to San Francisco. I was using a carbonyl-molybdenite (Telefunken) detector. KHK was sending press on 500 kc to the other Hawaiian islands.

I had no way of knowing then that 47 years later my working career would end at KHK and that, even after retirement, I would be recalled for brief periods until 1970.

Operating under the authority of the (then) Mutual Telephone Company and using a United Wireless Company's transmitter, as well as signing "KU", this well-known marine station opened early in the century, probably 1903. In 1908, using the same type of transmitter, Arthur Isbell at KU established contact with Louis Malarin at the "PH" station near San Francisco. This was the first wireless contact between Hawaii and the U.S. mainland.

KHK was operated throughout World War I and until the entry of the U.S. into World War II by the Mutual Telephone Company, and was located at Wahiawa, in the center of Oahu. After World War II, R.C.A. Global Communications acquired KHK's franchise. The station, call sign and all, was returned to approximately its original location near Kahuku, where R.C.A. housed its extensive point-to-point transmitting system.

Of the five employees at KHK at closure, Les Leigh and George Gieser remained in the company's employ, while William Moore, Carlton Taber and Tom Gary were retired.

The five and their wives, plus my wife and I (although I retired in 1961) were guests at a Farewell Dinner at Kemoo Restaurant. We mourned the bygone era of professional brass-pounding; and I was elected to record the good fellowship and good food on that occasion, Sunday, May 7, 1978.

The complex of buildings in the Kahuku area that housed KHK just after World War II was built by The Marconi Wireless Telegraph Company of America; construction began in 1914. The station had been in this area earlier, of course, and was moved back after the war.

During the construction in 1914, low frequency transmitters of 250 kw were installed, with call letters KIE and later KGI. The walls of some of the buildings were four or five feet thick because, without such, the noise of the old Marconi open gaps could be heard for ten miles on either side of the station.

The 500-foot steel towers necessitated a troop of 25 to 35 riggers, who were delivered to work by a narrow-gauge railroad constructed by the Oahu Railroad and Land Company at the start of the century. The stop-off point for this railroad, which went out of business a year or so after World War II, was known to the rural community as "Marconi."

It was after World War I that R.C.A. was formed to comply with new laws concerning the prohibition of foreign-owned communications in the U.S. R.C.A. took over the entire Marconi complex at Kahuku and replaced the old Marconi open spark gaps with the Alexanderson Alternators.

Whether the Hawaiian community can absorb the service cut-off caused by KHK's closing, or whether some type of similar service will be restored, remains to be seen.

WHEN GUNNERY FLOATS SHOOT BACK

By William H. Lewis, 3144-V

My only distress signal resulted when a smoke float, tossed over-side for gunnery practice, began firing back at us!

Well, maybe not exactly, but it sure seemed so at the time.

It was early in WW2, when we were returning to New York from Trinidad, BWI. I was on a brand new Liberty ship, the SS Thomas Stone, and we had delivered a cargo of electronic gear to the Navy base at Trinidad. The time was October, 1942, and we were going through the Windward Passage, sailing alone.

It was a beautiful, calm afternoon, and the captain decided to drop a smoke float overboard to give the Navy gun crew some practice. When the float was about two miles astern, the gun crew opened up with the five-inch stern gun. The first shot was over, but the smoke prevented judging how far.

And then a shell exploded dead astern, coming from the general direction of the smoke float!

We were fresh out of the Baltimore shipyard and, on our trial run had made 16 knots (the only Liberty I ever knew that did!) So the captain ordered the engine room to go all out, which they did. Also I was ordered to send out an SSSS, latitude, longitude, course and speed etc.

Guantanamo Naval Base replied and followed the whole proceeding with interest.

By that time a surfaced submarine showed up through the smoke astern and fired another shot at us from its deck gun. This, like the earlier shot, fell short. We fired three shots at the sub, but our aim was lousy because the boys were excited.

It soon became clear that we were faster than the sub, and when we dropped two more smoke floats the sub gave up the chase. After an hour we were able to send OUM, then we proceeded to New York without further incident.

As for the rest of the war, before Pearl Harbor I was on a Standard Oil of New Jersey Panamanian tanker carrying oil to the Canary Islands. We had to run fully lighted, with a huge Panamanian flag painted on a vertical board mounted on one of the tanks and lighted by a searchlight on each side.

In addition I had to transmit "CQ, SS C.J. Barkdul, latitude, longitude, course, speed" every four hours. We heard later that both the British and the Germans were guarding the ship all the way across, because 60 percent of the oil was to go to the British and 40 percent to the Germans. Just at dawn a number of times a sub was sighted on the horizon on one side of us and a cruiser on the other.

Then I ran up and down the East Coast of the U. S. from Aruba and other ports on a Cities Service tanker, the SS Hadnot (now there's a name for you!) during the hectic days of the tanker massacre along the coast. I think there was one big oil slick from Boston to the Florida Straits in those days. They even sank a tanker near the second pilot station by New Orleans while we were up the river loading casein head oil.

I decided I'd had enough tankers for a while and got another Liberty ship -- only to learn that our first cargo was ammunition for England!

While I was on a WWI Hog Islander carrying wheat for England, we were torpedoed Oct. 29, 1943, at 0400 off Iceland in a heavy storm. We sank in less than seven minutes. We were unable to get off a message as the radio equipment had been knocked off the wooden bulkheads, and both masts came down.

The Navy radioman and I managed to throw the codebooks overside in a weighted bag. The boats could not be launched because the heavy seas were washing knee-deep across the boat deck. About this time I got hit by a flying piece of dunnage and was knocked out. When I came to, the ship had sunk.

The water was 39 degrees, but due to the floating fuel oil that covered us many layers deep, two hours in the water did no lasting damage to us. None of the survivors inhaled or swallowed any oil, and of course all wore life jackets.

We were picked up by a Canadian corvette and three days later were landed at Londonderry. After seven weeks in the hospital I was shipped back to New York and assigned to another Liberty.

I was on ships that took part in both the North African and Normandy invasions (D-day). I made 17 trips to Omaha and Utah beaches and eight to Oran and Dakar.

I quit the sea in 1949, spent 10 years at the VOA, Wayne, N. J., then went to work for CBS. I retired in 1971.

I still have current papers and licenses, even if I am 73 years old. Another war anyone?

'Since the days of Marconi'

BRISTOL BAY EXPERIENCE

MAKING FRIENDS & BREAKING ROUTINE

....WITH NEWSGRAMS

By Herbert H. (Steve) Stevens, 3053-SGP

A little old shortwave, home-built receiver helped make my April-August, 1928, tour aboard the Alaska Packers Association tugboat SS Kadiak both rewarding and memorable.

But more about that later. We left Alameda, Calif., April 26, and ran into a severe storm six hours beyond the Golden Gate. After several hours of strong headwinds, driving rain and heavy seas, I was alerted to a possible distress message.

The bilges were flooding faster than they could be pumped out, due to some faulty pumps. But the "black gang" worked frantically and well and soon the distress alert was cancelled.

But our woe was not over. The Delco gas-engine-driven generator gave up. This Delco plant charged the batteries which, in turn, supplied power for the ship's safety equipment, including the quarter-kilowatt quenched gap radio transmitter.

So the chief engineer and I unbolted the Delco from a bulkhead, seven feet above the deck and lowered it to where we could work on it. Meanwhile the storm continued unabated, and the pitching and yawing of the old tugboat helped our chore very little. As might be expected, we outran the storm and finished the Delco repair job at the same time!

From there the northbound voyage was pleasant -- no more storms. The quarter-kilowatt transmitter and small tugboat antenna did not "get out" too well in daylight hours. But the daily position reports were sent to KFS, usually with a Japanese "Maru" ship offering QSP after my second call to KFS went unanswered.

But back to my small receiver. I had brought it for my own entertainment in off-duty hours -- but it resulted in many favors being granted me, by officers and crew, during the entire salmon fishing season in the Bristol Bay area.

It was a simple two-tube receiver, consisting of an autodyne detector and one stage of audio. Both tubes were UV201's, powered by four A batteries and a single 45-volt B battery. Several home-made plug-in coils provided almost complete coverage between 3 and 30 MHz.

I'd had a purpose in bringing the receiver along. My wife Alvina was expecting our second child about mid-June, and I wanted to know about Alvina's progress, as well as to get word of the baby's arrival.

With this in mind, my amateur transmitter had been set up at Del Armstrong's 6ABH, about a mile from my own 6DMQ. We had arranged that Del would transmit to me blind on 40-meter CW every evening. With my receiver connected to the tug's antenna, this schedule worked out very well. I copied Del every evening and received word of our Number One son's birth just ten hours after he was born.

Aboard the Kadiak all messages sent or received had to be inscribed in pencil. There was no typewriter aboard. But I found a good supply of onionskin paper and matching carbons -- and put it to good use.

Before and after my 6ABH schedules, I would copy several pages of news including baseball scores and other sports items. With a pencil only moderately sharp, I could make good originals and as many as six carbons.

Each evening, I delivered these "news bulletins" to the captain, first mate, chief engineer, the galley and the forward crew quarters. Evidently such service had never existed aboard the Kadiak before -- and all hands seemed pleased and grateful.

Which probably explained why I got some pretty special treatment at Bristol Bay. Upon arrival there, off the large fish cannery at Naknek, the tug was rigged to tow lighters out to the salmon grounds and return them, loaded with fish, to Naknek. The fishermen were paid by the fish -- so each salmon had to be counted with care. So Kadiak personnel were often pressed into service counting fish with hand-held counters -- including the radio operator.

But over and over I noticed the appreciation of my "news bulletins." Often I would be told to "go somewhere and take a nap," the messenger meanwhile relieving me of my counter. Several times I was relieved of counting duty for a full day -- and I took these occasions for a long exploration of the Bristol Bay country, a cannery visit and a visit to the base radio station KHT.

A dinghy would put me ashore and return for me in time for evening chow, which thanks to my news bulletins often included some very special desserts and extras.

The area around Naknek was largely tundra country, stark but beautiful in its way in summer, with its rapidly growing vegetation and pretty wild flowers. With an improvised "sight," I saw tundra grass on one occasion grow more than one-eighth inch taller in a span of twenty minutes.

Almost 24 hours of sunshine during June and July captured my interest. For several days near summer solstice the sun at its lowest point just skimmed the horizon.

It was at Naknek, in a small infirmary near the cannery, that I lost a tooth. The "dentist" was a young man of limited experience and even more limited equipment. I got a small shot of novacaine in the gum near the bad tooth, then lay down on an ironing board supported at each end by a chair-back. The tooth came out after much tugging and twisting with an ordinary pair of pliers. I was given a mouthwash and sent back to work -- primitive perhaps, but effective.

On our return voyage, fog engulfed us about 20 miles north of the Golden Gate. My radio bearings from Navy DF stations were accurate, however, and we tied up at Alameda in the evening of August 30.

OPENING FISH DOCK WITH SALT WATER BUCKET

MAKING A SALT WATER RHEOSTAT THE HARD WAY

By Howard F. Mason, 2838

Radio operators in the Alaskan cannery service are sometimes called upon for duties not exactly typical. I was operator at Union Bay during the 1932 season; and one rainy night around midnight I learned this fact -- the hard way.

I had just turned in after clearing the last schedule with our boats when there came a pounding at the door. It was the superintendent and he wore a very worried look.

"Put on your pants and come down to the fish dock right away," he said. And as we stumbled off into the dark he tried to explain. "We've got a helluva situation and you're the only one around knows anything about electricity."

It seems the Bessie B. (seine boat) was tied up to the unloading dock with a dead battery -- and no way to get her engine started. "Two more boats are coming in with full loads of fish pretty soon," the super went on; "and anyhow the Bessie B. is doing no good blocking the unloading slip; she should be out there where all those fish are right now. We've got to get her going -- and quick!"

I wondered what he expected me to do. But on the way to the dock an idea popped. The cannery power was 110 volts DC and the boat had a dead 32-volt DC battery. If we had a suitable series charging resistance, it should be possible to give the battery a quick charge, enough to get the engine started.

A lamp bank would do it. We could get the lamp bulbs at the company store; but there were no sockets, and it would take far too long to solder the lamps together without them.

What else? How about a water rheostat? Once I saw in a book how to make a water rheostat by immersing two metal electrodes in a container of salted water; by varying the amount of salt and the depth of immersion, you could vary the current.

So someone brought a battered old bucket for one electrode and a short piece of pipe for the other. We could get salt from the cookhouse; but why bother? Sea water was already salty and much closer at hand. Somebody came up with enough scrap wire to reach from the dim bulb overhead on the dock to the charging panel on the boat, with our water rheostat in series. We filled the bucket, lowered in the pipe, and the engineer on the boat started calling out the readings on the charging meter. We were in business!

"Five amps, ten, fifteen, twenty -- hold 'er there now!" Meanwhile, from the dock, "Hey, watch it! She's going to boil over!" As a large cloud of steam rose, great gobs of slime in several colors oozed over the edge and ran down the sides of the bucket. And stink! Whew! "Somebody hand me a rag quick! This pipe is getting too hot to hold." And from the boat, "Shut 'er down quick! The meter is off scale!" Well, we laid a stick across the top of the bucket and tied the pipe to it at about the right depth and put in some more water and we were off again.

By that time we had acquired an audience, all of whom wanted to see what was in the bucket. The Filipinos from the cannery probably thought we were inventing a new way to cook fish with electricity. The natives, I suppose, might have feared we were trying to bring back the spirits of their ancestors.

Anyway, we held on for maybe 20 minutes, when the engineer yelled, "Shut 'er off and let's see if she'll start, OK?" He then jerked our wires from the charging panel and pressed the starter button.

Chug-chug-chugalug -- and the big engine started as smoothly as if nothing had ever been wrong. A big "hooray" went up from the crowd, and then everybody went home. The Bessie B. pulled away full speed for the fishing grounds; the other boats came in to unload, and the superintendent was happy. As for me, I threw the whole business overboard, bucket and all, and went back to my shack and back to bed.

The next morning at breakfast the book-keeper leaned over and said, "Say, Sparks, what was all that commotion down on the fish dock last night? They tell me you --" But I already had my hands tight over my ears and my eyes shut. I didn't want to hear any more about it.



Demchuck

'WPA' SERVES THE GULF



The story about Station "WPA" appeared in the August 27 1978 issue of the BEAUMONT ENTERPRISE-JOURNAL and was written by Richard Stewart, Staff Writer. Pictures were by Roy Bray, also of the paper. Reprint was by kind permission of the paper. We wish to thank our

members, Fred Walworth 2189-P (N5ET); Dr. Robert L. Kurth 1676-V (W5IRP) and others for sending a copy of this fine article for republication. Society members Jim Crouch and Eric Colborn are pictured along with that of Chuck Derapelian and John Broussard. (CX)



Transmitters are old and operators use hand telegraph keys but vital messages still go through.

By RICHARD STEWART
Staff Writer

PORT ARTHUR — Radio station WPA never plays a Top 40 rock and roll or country and western tune, has never had a talk show and isn't even on most radio dials — yet it's been heard all over the world and broadcasts vital information every day.

WPA is one of RCA's four shore-to-ship radio stations and is one of the oldest radio stations in the country. Even if most people could pick up the station on their radios, they wouldn't understand it. WPA has never transmitted anything but Morse code.

Although the station was first built inside the Gulf refinery to communicate with Gulf ships, half of the 200 or so messages it handles today are between Exxon offices and Exxon ships.

Station manager Chuck Derapelian says code is used because Morse code transmissions can get through static and interference that would make voice communications impossible.

In an age of computer technology, WPA wireless operators still use old-fashioned hand telegraph keys or, at the most, "bug" semi-automatic keys of the type that were used decades ago.

WPA handles all the communications with Exxon ships in Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic Ocean waters and often with ships in the Pacific as far away as Hawaii and Alaska.

Teletype machines connect WPA with Exxon offices and with Western Union's telex system. In the old days operators had to communicate with ships using the International Morse code and with shipping company offices using the American Morse code. The two codes were quite different.

Now operators communicate with offices using the typewriter-like keyboards of the teletype machines and on an ancient machine that transmits handwritten messages from the station and some offices.

A few personal messages come to

the station from ships and WPA operators often just relay the messages by telephone.

Gift messages are still popular, Derapelian says. Men serving on ships can order gifts via WPA from a clearing house in New York. The New York firm has the gifts delivered to any place in the United States.

Christmas is always a good time for gift messages, Derapelian says, but more gift messages are sent for Mother's Day than any other time.

WPA went on the air in late 1923, Eric Coburn of Nederland says. Coburn was the station's first manager.

An amateur "ham" radio operator at the tender age of 9 in 1909, Coburn grew up in New England and was a wireless operator on Navy blimps and bomber patrol planes during World War I.

After that war, he went to sea and came to Port Arthur on a Gulf ship and was hired to work at WPA.

Back in those days the station used what was called a spark gap transmitter, a device that created a spark to set up broad-banded radio waves. The signals from spark gap transmitters were really a sort of semi-controlled static.

"When we transmitted," he says, "we'd blank out radios all over the area," Coburn says. "It got so bad that when people asked me where I worked, I would tell them the WPA stood for Works Progress Administration," a New Deal employment program.

WPA was first operated under contract by the Independent Wireless Telegraphy Co., which in 1929 became part of the Radio Corporation of America — RCA.

Since then WPA has been moved to a small, flat-roofed building on the banks of the Intracoastal Waterway in the shadow of the Texas-124 bridge.

Most of the equipment in the station was built in 1942. Derapelian has the job of keeping it going 24 hours a day.



Radio station WPA operators Jim Crouch, foreground, and John Broussard keep ships in contact with their home offices.

There was a time when all radio transmissions were made at frequencies below the present-day AM broadcast band. WPA still does much of its work on those frequencies.

At designated times during each hour, the station is required by law to listen to 500 kilohertz, the international marine calling frequency, to listen for distress calls.

WPA operates on 418 kilohertz, as well as four shortwave bands. The shortwave frequencies allows the station to talk to ships as far away as the Pacific during certain times of the night.

One operator is on duty during the evening and night shifts and two are on duty on the day shift. Getting qualified operators is sometimes a

problem, Derapelian says.

All of the operators have to have at least a second class commercial radiotelegrapher's license and have to pass tough electronics and Morse code tests to get it.

Derapelian says he's the second youngest member of the staff and all of the operators are over 50. Most of them were radio operators on ships before joining the station's staff.

Derapelian "swallowed the anchor" between 1943 and 1947, he says, serving on merchant ships. He worked in other industries for awhile and then joined RCA and came to Port Arthur to run WPA in 1967.

Born in New York, he says he's a proud resident of Port Neches now. Shipboard radio operators have to

put in six months service aboard a U.S. ship before getting a license to run a ship's radio room. Since few merchant ships are registered in the United States and even fewer carry more than one radio operator, it's difficult for people to get the needed six months experience to meet license requirements, he says.

Many shipboard operators come out of the U.S. Coast Guard, Derapelian says. Many foreign operators have little or no real training and sometimes their radio transmissions show it.

Coburn still goes out to sea from time to time and he says he was embarrassed not long ago when he was on a ship with an Italian crew and a French radio with a telegraph key so big and unhandy that "I sounded like

a damned lid."

"Lid" is radio language for a sloppy operator.

RCA has asked the Federal Communications Commission to allow the company to close WPA, but the FCC refused, saying the station was needed. It and a station in Galveston are the only such stations on the Texas coast and one of the few coastal stations still in operation in the country.

The station may someday be replaced by sophisticated satellite communications, but for now many ships and offices ashore still communicate via old radio station WPA.

The transmitters and receivers still use tubes and the operators still use old-fashioned telegraph keys.

And the messages still get through.

Jim Crouch, left, talks to a ship via the wireless airwaves, Chuck Derapelian, top right, checks the large tubes, and bottom right checks notes with oldtime operator Eric Colborn.



STRANGE MYSTERIES..

OF THE SEA



His palace where he kept his horses was in the depths of the ocean and his grottos were adorned with coral and sea flowers. Poseidon, legend asserts, invented the ship and was also said curiously enough, to have invented the horse, which became sacred to him, by striking the ground with his trident.

All mariners respected and acknowledged his mastery over the sea and it was their custom to make prayers and sacrifices to him not only before setting out on a voyage, but also when beset by storm or calm and again after a safe return.

Nobody knows how old this ancient legend is or exactly how it got started, but it goes without saying that it is one of the most ancient and yet most preserved of all of the pagan tales of the sea dating back to the Babylonians and Greeks of old. Seldom ever does a ship cross the Equator, even in our day, when the solemn rights of King Neptune Rex are not applied in initiation to those who for the first time are crossing the world's waistline.

WATERSPOUTS

Waterspouts were a constant source of dread to the early mariner and these inexplicable phenomena took a heavy toll of the smaller vessels in ancient times. Some thought the waterspout was a mighty wind arising from beneath the sea instead of, as later transpired, a swirling cone of cloud tapering downwards. Some believed it to be a terrible black serpent rearing up from the bottom of the sea. To the more simple-minded sailors, these fearful twisting columns appeared as dragons, and in the Middle Ages they were called dragons-de-mer.

John of Brompton wrote of a great black dragon in the Gulf of Solato which every month came down from the clouds, its tail seemingly fixed in the sky. Drinking greedily at the water the creature would swallow up any ship crossing its path. Many devices were used to escape this peril.

Sometimes the crew would frighten the dragon away with a great tumult of shouting and stamping on the deck. Swords would be beaten together in the shape of a cross, or a black handled knife plunged into the mast during prayers. Another method, firing a gun into the heart of a waterspout, has also been used in more modern times—but not, we suspect, in order to intimidate the dragon.

LONG LEGENDARY VOYAGES

Long voyages were common in medieval days, but few could have been as overdone as that of the holy one known as St. Brendan the bold in A.D. 484. This man of esteem to the ancients was said to be a descendant of St. Patrick. He set out with a dozen other monks to find the holy Isle of the Blessed—a voyage that was to last seven years. Many trials beset the monks for they were attacked by all manner of monsters at sea and found no welcome at the many islands they visited.

In one harbor, the beach was packed with pygmies and dwarfish hostile creatures, as black as coal, and another was peopled with fallen angels in the shapes of hideous birds.

Eventually they drew nigh to an island where the inhabitants, a race of smiths, blew up their forges until the whole land was a mass of fire, then bombarded the ship with lumps of glowing slag. But, the resolute band pressed on, continuing their search.



CONTINUED PAGE 9

THE UNUSUAL SIDE OF THE SEA



BY JIM GIBBS

If through some act of the Almighty, all of the irregularities in the earth's crust were ironed out, reducing the planet to a perfectly smooth sphere, the seas would totally submerge the world under a uniform liquid film about 8,000 feet deep. The deepest part of the ocean extends about seven miles below the surface, about a mile deeper than Mount Everest, the world's highest peak, (29,028 feet) rises above sea level. Though man, cannot control the sea, its surface has been his basis of operation and the depths an inexhaustive supply of food, as well as a liquid world for exploration and the pranks of war.

That the oceans are filled with unsolved mysteries goes without saying. The pioneering spirit of man upon the seas has gone ever forward. He can reach the deepest depths in bathyspheres; he can take his ships through barriers of ice at the top and bottom of the world; he can navigate sizable steamers in lakes at the 12,500 foot elevation mark; he can take ships with ease through all the oceans of the world, and yet scientists say we still have much to learn about the wonders beneath and upon its waters. We have, however, come a long way since Arthur Clough once wrote:

"Where lies the land to which the ship would go? Far, far ahead, is all her seamen know."

Where most writings about the sea record man's triumphs, these pages record in much part the unusual accomplishments and the folly, superstitions, freak voyages, jinxed ships and unsolved mysteries.

LEGENDS AND MYTHS OF THE SEA



A sea serpent.

Serpents that swallowed ships. . . calms that never lifted. . . craft that sailed off the edge of the earth are involved in legends that often kept the ancient mariners tossing in their sleep.

The heathen seafarers of early times once regarded the sea as the source of all good and evil. They feared its anger and sought to appease the demons in its depths. Not unnaturally, the gods they worshipped were those who, by their command over wind and wave, could bring them good fortune—or disaster as the case might be.

Greatest of these sea divinities was Poseidon, or King Neptune as he later came to be called—God of the Mediterranean Sea and later king of all the seas of the world.

Bearing his trident, the symbol of his power, Poseidon rode over the waves in a magnificent chariot drawn by horses with golden manes and brazen hoofs, while around him tritons, nymphs and other sea creatures would gather in playful antics.

INTRODUCTION

They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters; These see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep. Psalms 107: 23-24

Joseph Conrad once wrote - "If thou would'st know the age of the earth, look upon the sea in a storm. The greyness of the whole immense surface, the wind-furrows upon the faces of the waves, the great masses of foam, tossed about and waving like matted white locks, give the sea in a gale an appearance of hoary age, lustreless, dull, without gleams as though it had been created before light itself."

The sea, a thing of beauty and terror, is perhaps the way of man's earliest transportation, for doubtless the craft came before the wheel, and next to foot travel, floating conveyances must go back nearly to the creation of man.

Writers and artists of every land have been drawn by the sea, to write of its wrathful moods, picturesque scenes, fathomless depths and unsolved mysteries. In it they see a fearful and capricious destroyer, the everlasting highway of trans-ocean merchantmen and the battleground of undersea monsters.

In 768 A.D. there spoke one Alcuin, tutor to the young son of Emperor Charlemagne.

"What is the sea? The path of the daring, the frontier of land, the decider of continents, the hostelry of the rivers, the fountain of rain, a refuge in peril, a treat in pleasure."

Amazing is the sea in its natural composition and function and upon its surface man and his frail ships have written the chapters of civilization. The earth is almost drowned in water. Only 29 per cent of its entire crust manages to break free. So we find that 71 per cent of our planetary surface is hidden under a liquid over-layer averaging about two miles deep.



THE UNUSUAL SIDE OF THE SEA

a slop chest of sea lore

by
"Shipwreck" Jim Gibbs
... ably assisted by
first mate Cherie

Illustrations by
Betty J. Eicher
and others

Reprinted by permission of Author, Jim Gibbs who published "The Unusual Side of the Sea" in 1971. This is Chapter IV of his book which was reviewed in the 1972 Newsletter (Page 51). We plan to publish the rest of Jim's interesting book in the coming editions of SPARKS JOURNAL QUARTERLY.

Our thanks to Jim Gibbs, Betty Eicher, Cherie and others who made this copy available to our members.

At long last they found the Isle of the Blessed which was re-named St. Brendan's Isle or Hy-Brasail (Royal Island). For centuries after, men believed in and attempted to find the cherished isle in the wake of the monks, one expedition setting out as late as 1721. There are many detailed accounts of it but neither belief nor the cartographers' charts could give substance to this legend of the earthly paradise.

Such places of grandeur have long fascinated those who go down to the sea in ships. The kingdoms of Lemoria and Atlantis are believed by some to have actually existed.

Behind the mighty coastal ramparts of what is now northern California in Mendocino and Humboldt Counties was believed hidden the fabulously rich kingdom of Quivera which was never found by explorers but which was carried on all navigation charts of the new world for two centuries. The legendary kingdom was alleged to have streets of gold. If such a kingdom ever existed it was swallowed up by the eons of time and the greatest treasure of the area are the tall stands of redwoods which experts say pre-date the advent of Christ on earth.



ENCHANTING MUSIC AND FISHES

Even the fish and mammals of ancient times were immortalized in legend. They were supposed to be enchanted by music—and this belief has been accepted right down to modern times. One in particular, the dolphin, was said to be attracted to ships by the sound of voices and instruments. Their mild, playful manner was a marked contrast to another notorious ships' hanger-on, the sly and spiteful shark.

Stow describes Dolphins as "fishes... that follow the voices of men and rejoice in playing of instruments and are wont to gather themselves at music." This sociable trait of the dolphin is said to have saved the life of Arion, the famous poet and musician of old.

Returning one day with rich prizes from a music contest in Sicily, he was set upon by the sailors who threatened to kill him. Begging leave to play once more on his lyre, he played like a man inspired and then leaped into the sea. But his music had brought the song-loving dolphins around the ship, and one took Arion on his back and bore him safely ashore. Ovid recounts the tale thus:

'But past belief, a Dolphin's arched back,
Preserv'd Arion from his destin'd wrack.
Secure he sits, and with harmonious strains,
Requites his bearer for his friendly pains.'

Of all sea creatures, none has inspired such an array of colorful legends as the fabled sea serpent. From the early times there have been startling and spine-tingling accounts of huge creatures besporting themselves on the fringes of the sea or from out of the lathless depths.

Many serpent tales originated in New England. John Josselyn, describing his voyage to America in 1638, wrote of a sea serpent coiled upon a rock at Cape Ann. When an Englishman on a passing boat went to shoot at it, he was dissuaded by Indians on the ship who warned that if the serpent was not killed outright, they would all be in danger of their lives. Later stories say the creature was nearly 100 feet long and "as big round in ye thickest part as a wine pipe."

Earlier, tales of sea serpents multiplied in the Middle Ages and are so well documented that it is hard to dissemble fiction from fact.

Such weird monsters are not uncommon today. Imagination plays strange tricks at sea where the smallest object can be enhanced by natural causes or phenomena. But, after allowing for all exaggerations, certain things remain which cannot be satisfactorily explained. It is fascinating to consider the possibility, however remote, that creatures exist in the ocean, of which man still has no knowledge.

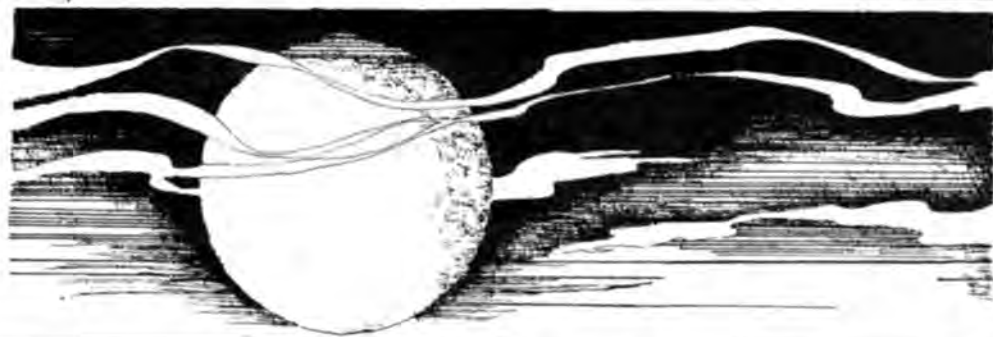
ST. ELMO'S FIRE

A startling sight for a sailor is the brush-like electric light chasing along the masts and rigging of his ship in stormy weather. "St. Elmo's Fire," he may say, voicing, perhaps unknowingly, a centuries old legend. To the early sailors, this ghostly light was an omen, for good and evil, and many believe it showed the presence of their guardian saint come to reassure or warn them of what was to come. Two separate lights at the same time were taken as a sign of fair weather and good fortune; one meant a storm. Sometimes the light would envelope the heads of sailors themselves, as during the voyage of the Argonauts, when it appeared in answer to the prayers of Orpheus, as a comforting sign around the heads of Castor and Pollux. In later years, St. Elmo's Fire became an omen of bad luck and some believed that when it illuminated the head of a sailor, it foretold of approaching death.

Who was St. Elmo? Did he ever exist? There are many possible theories but it appears most likely that the name Elmo was derived by stages from St. Erasmus who was the patron saint of Mediterranean sailors.

It goes without saying that the hardships endured at sea endowed the ancient mariner to seek balm for his tormented soul. Visions of grandeur and dreams into the realm of the fantastic perhaps supplied the incentive for the origination of many strange legends.

Getting to the more practical side of maritime practices of the dim past, everything had its price—even the wind. This was certainly true centuries ago among the Finns and Laplanders who were famed for weather making and did a brisk trade in selling "winds" to sailors. Numerous tales exist of this traffic in winds, and one story even records the price paid—ten kronen, then worth about one



pound, 16 shillings, plus one pound of tobacco. For his money the sailor received a cord with three knots in it.

On undoing the first knot, a fair wind would blow up; the second would produce a gale; and when the third knot was untied such a tempest would arise as nearly to wreck the ship. Less than a century ago an old woman on the Isle of Man sold two cords with three knots each to John McTaggart, a trader between Kintyre and ports along the Irish Coast. The first knot brought him a breeze, the second a gale. But when hearing breakers, he rashly untied the third, such a hurricane sprang up that some houses on shore were destroyed. On his return journey, he was careful to undo only two knots.

Sometimes the winds were sold in bags, which sea captains hung up outside their cabin doors. Today's slang word, "windbag," describing a garrulous individual, is an interesting reminder of this age-old practice.



The salty mythical King Neptune.

MERMAIDS AND MERMEN

Time was long ago when a mermaid was a topic of almost every voyage. Now they only appear in jest; even the prows of ships no longer are decorated with these lovely fishtailed ladies.

The encyclopedia says of mermaids: "In Celtic and Teutonic folklore a fabulous marine creature with the head and body of a beautiful woman to the waist and a fishlike lower body." The mermaid is frequently described as appearing above the surface of the water and combing her long hair with one hand while holding a looking glass in the other. The mythical mermaid, we are told, was an excellent swimmer and diver. She enjoyed life under the green waves and on the sunbaked rocks where she spent her time combing her locks. She could also sing enchanting songs and her favorite pastime was to lure, through enchantment, a ship and its crew to places of danger.

So said the ancients; they sang to tempt sailors to dismal shipwreck. And always was the sailor's will weak after long, lonely months at sea.

Ancient Babylonian clay seals depict both mermaids and mermen and the astronomer-priest, Berossus, in his "History of Syria," written about 260 B.C. credits a merman—and where there were mermen there were mermaids—with instructing ancient Babylonians in the arts of civilization.

Homer's "Odyssey" calls them sirens but they are about the same creatures as the mermaid, only the sirens were said to have been around prior to their later counterparts.

Modern scientists discredit the sailors' yarns of mermaids. They say there never was or never could be real mermaids. For one thing, they insist, fish are cold-blooded animals and humans are warm-blooded. They do not mention whether or not a mermaid could have lukewarm blood which would place her somewhere between.

Mermaids are also supposed to be able to breathe both under water and out of the water. Scientists again make haste in saying that no highly developed creature has both gills and lungs.

It is certainly not difficult to see how the mermaid legend arose or why it dates back to the ancient days. Those old-time mariners put to sea on seemingly endless voyages and crews saw only one another for months and sometimes years. In their loneliness, together mingled with the strange apparitions often seen at sea, their minds conjured up weird things that bordered on the fantastic, and what greater yearning could the sailor have had than for a gorgeous maiden emerging from the deep?

Lest one blame the sailor for his visions of grandeur let it be said that at a far distance on a flat sea, even a sea elephant rising from the murky depths could be mistaken for a maiden when the sun's reflections are just right on the water.

One must admit that the desire to see a pretty creature, and to hear the sound of sweet music can quicken the pulse in any man. Though the sailor's imagination may have been exaggerated a bit, there also existed some element of reality in his visions. A man sees just what he wants to see. Those ancient seafarers sincerely believed they saw lovely creatures combing their locks, singing haunting songs. Perhaps the basking creatures were nothing more than a group of seals enjoying a siesta, and the music, the surf breaking softly on hidden reefs. Perhaps the navigator was lured on by loneliness and curiosity only to find himself shipwrecked on a hostile reef.

Science Answers Legend

Scientists who claim to have an answer to everything, have another notion. They have reasoned that the manatee, a strange bulky animal that frolics in the water with somewhat human-like notions topside, gives rise to the mermaid legend. This rather grotesque creature which prefers weedy, wide inlets and rivers is about as attractive as the ugliest seahag ever dreamed up by man. They in no way resemble one's idea of a graceful mermaid, although their kind is named Sirenia after the mermaid sirens. The manatee does not sing, has no hair, and its face is like a pile of old rubber tires. It lives under water and only comes up when it desires to breathe.

Imagine, however, the crew of an old whaling ship at sea for three years without the sight of a woman, and even a manatee might excite the imagination.

In folklore, mermaids and mermen were supposed to wed mortal men or mortal women as the case might be. Figures of both are frequently found in ancient and medieval art. Though the merman is rather a forgotten factor, the mermaid continues to live on in the hearts of sailors the world over. Men have written much about her; perhaps none has immortalized her more than the pen of Tennyson:

I would be a mermaid fair;
I would sing to myself the whole of the day;
With a comb of pearl I would comb my hair;
And still as I combed I would sing and say,
'Who is it loves me? Who loves not me?'

Perhaps in some corner of our civilized world, unspoiled by time, the mermaid yet hopefully exists, but not likely.

DAVY JONES

In direct contrast to the lovely mermaid, is a creature known as Davy Jones. This motley character has been the theme of many superstitions. While King Neptune became the ruler of the seven seas, Davy Jones became somewhat the devil of everything on the bottom of the sea, sort of a mythical comparison of heaven and hell. The actual term Davy Jones' Locker is doubtless of ancient English origin. The locker representing the bottom of the sea is where everything goes including the bodies of dead sailors.

Though many tales revolve about this goblin of the deep, his locker is closely associated with another timeless English nautical expression—Fiddler's Green. This was a term British sailors used for the place where souls of good sailors go to a life of pleasure and ease after their bodies go to Davy Jones' Locker.

Many true episodes of the nautical past have been lost in obscurity, yet do the strange assorted tales and legends live on.

Perhaps few men cared less for their own safety than the early seafarers, yet their simple minds were often obsessed by fear of apparitions with whom they associated awesome powers. They prayed to them; their songs are full of them; they fervently believed in them. One of the most dreaded of these specters was Adamastor, who threatened ships off the Cape of Good Hope and inspired the legendary fear of 'going round the Cape.'

Adamastor was the outcast spirit of a giant who had dared to challenge Zeus, and he appeared as a huge cloud with human features. There is a vivid account of fearful aspect in the Luciad, an epic poem by the Portuguese, Cameons, in which he describes how Adamastor terrorized Vasco da Gama on his voyage round the Cape:

'High and enormous o'er the flood he tower'd,
And thwart our way with sullen aspect lower'd
And earthly paleness o'er his cheeks was spread,
Erect uprose his hairs of wither'd red;
His haggard beard flow'd quivering in the wind,
Revenge and horror in his mien combined!'

It must have been a frightening spectacle for the hardest seaman on a dark and stormy night!

It is little wonder that just about everyone but Christopher Columbus thought he would drop off the edge of the world if he sailed his ships far enough westward. The intelligent few who rose above superstitions and fear opened the new world to the timid and the stupid.

Ancient mariners sometimes killed young maidens and christened their ships with their blood to appease the gods of the sea. Sometimes they even affixed a dead maiden's head to a ship's prow to please the gods who in turn would grant a fair passage. This, later resulted in the practice of using figureheads on ships.

SARGASSO SEA STORIES

Some legends and tales of ancient times border on the preposterous, but in more recent centuries the yarns of the sea, as they came to be known, bore semblances of truth. Of such are the weird tales woven around the fabled Sargasso Sea, which right up to the turn of the last century was believed to be the locale of the "isle of lost ships"—a nautical graveyard which formed a giant floating island.

A few hundred miles east of Bermuda, within the swirl of the warm Atlantic currents lies this remarkable tract of peaceful water, abounding in gulf weed and teeming with species of sea life found nowhere else in the world.

It was Christopher Columbus who attached to it the name Sargasso Sea. His crew were fearful of its floating masses of sargassum weed and its eerie stillness which made them feel that they had forever been cut off from contact with the outside world. The dislike for this strange sea was passed on by the men that sailed with Columbus and was soon known to seafarers the world over.



Currents of the Sargasso Sea.

Such yarns of terror were to reach the ears of novelist Jules Verne four centuries later and gave incentive to his **Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea**. Within, he painted a highly colored picture on which "—floated products of all kinds, entangled amidst these brownish herbs; trunks of trees, and the remains of keels of ships bottoms..."

Later writers improved on the tale and there blossomed a legend of a desolate sea, filled with a vast, ruinous congregation of wrecked ships, a sea on which sailors leared to venture lest they be trapped beyond hope of escape in an impenetrable vortex of weed.

Legends and yarns of this sort even today remain truth in the minds of many who will long regard the Sargasso Sea as Verne and later writers portrayed it—a forbidding silent world.

The English explorer and rover of the seas, Sir John Hawkins, had heard of such tales derived from the Columbus voyages of a century earlier, and in 1590, he also saw and described the area.



STRANGE & UNUSUAL MYSTERIES OF THE SEA - GIBBS



Sargasso Sea Stories

According to his account: "In 1590, lying with the Fleet about the islands of the Azores over a period of about six months, the greater part of the time we were becalmed and the sea became so replenished with several sorts of jellies and the forms of serpents, adders and snakes, as seemed wonderful; some green, some black, some yellow, some white and many of them had life."

His writings went on to say, "Some there were a yard and a half and some two yards long, which if I had not seen I would hardly have believed; and hereof are witnesses all the Company of the Ships which were then present, so that hardly a man could draw a bucket of water clear of some corruption."

Down through the decades the stories involving the Sargasso Sea grew in number, intrigue and interest. Indeed it was still believed at the turn of the century, and by then, such places of lost ships imagined in the minds of the ancient mariners had also spread to the Pacific. In fact, these tales persisted to such a degree that in 1910 the Norwegians put together an expedition to make a detailed survey of the Sargasso Sea to see indeed what lay at the eye of this mysterious current system. They would find out once and for all if there existed there, the trapped ships of ancient yarn. The expedition sailed right into the heart of the sea until sargassum weed became heavy and thick. But, they were unable to find any evidence of lost vessels.

The weed was dense but not dense enough to actually hold a ship prisoner. They found that countless tons of the stuff existed there, undoubtedly the same as when Columbus voyaged to the new world.

The report the expedition brought back quelled the anxiety of many, but great numbers of seafaring men the world over were not about to let one scientific expedition convince them that the Sargasso Sea was not the scene of an isle of lost ships. Tradition dies hard. The old yarns persisted and in the 1930's there was a fictitious film produced in Hollywood, titled, "The Isle of Lost Ships," which many believed was based on fact and which tended to keep the legends of the Sargasso Sea very much alive.

In many cases perhaps man doesn't really want to have the mysterious explained. When scientific answers come, the intrigue vanishes.

Since the Norwegian expedition of 1910, there have been many more voyages into the Sargasso Sea to study the weed and the many strange creatures that thrive in its warm and heavily saline waters—creatures such as described by Sir John Hawkins. There is the fierce Sargassum fish known as the Pterophyrne, with a body that blends into the seaweed, disguising the creature and allowing it to take its victims by surprise. Then there are eels and sea snails, unlike those on any other ocean, all having adapted themselves to the environment of the strange sargassum weed. The weed supposedly never really dies. Individual plants may live for decades, others for centuries, according to their species. The only time the weed dies is if it sinks into colder water miles below the surface of the Sargasso, or drifts away from the area into outward going currents into the cold north Atlantic and Arctic waters.

A crowning blow to the romanticists is plans for actually harvesting the sargassum weed in the Sargasso Sea by sending in factory ships to extract the weed substances for industrial, commercial and medicinal purposes.

But even though scientific research of the sea goes forth, the old yarns still persist.

DERELICT ISLAND



Of all of the old yarns spun by shellbacks, none has had greater interest than the one told by Captain Esau about Derelict Island. Even today some of the oldtime sailors swear it to be true. It was revived in the 1930's when Phillips Lord readied his four-masted schooner **Seth Parker** for her world cruise from the shores of New England. His weekly radio programs emanating from the cabin of the old windjammer reached the ears of millions.

As told, the tides of the ocean have a tendency to move toward one point which sailors call a "dead low." As such tides near a dead low point, they run in ever-increasing speed. Also, the trade winds have a tendency to blow toward a dead low. Men of the sea believe that everything afloat eventually ends up at the dead low point.

There is known to be a dead low in the southern Pacific Ocean where floating objects of all kinds are collected by the tides and the winds from the entire ocean. The debris piled up by the sea at this point has formed a huge floating island.

This is Captain Esau's story as nearly in his own words as can be remembered.

"It was this way. I was skipper of a barkentine, headed for South America with a cargo for Buenos Aires.

"The night that I am speaking about, we were 1,100 miles due north of the equator. The lookout came running down to the cabin and said there was something peculiar floating in the water two points off the starboard bow. I went up on deck and got my glasses. I could see something moving, so we put over a dory and rowed out. We found the wreckage of a small boat and holding onto it was a white man. He was absolutely exhausted. We brought him back to the ship and put him on a bunk. His skin hung loose about him and I don't suppose he weighed more'n 75 pounds.

"Well, he slept for nearly 24 hours and when he woke he sent for me. I went down to see him and he begged me to go to a certain longitude and latitude.

"Of course, I couldn't because I had a cargo on board that the owners were waiting for in Buenos Aires, but he begged so hard that I went up to my cabin and checked on the chart.

"There wasn't any land at that longitude and latitude. And then all of a sudden it dawned on me that that was the low of the Pacific Ocean, the spot that all vessels keep well clear of.

"I went back to see the stranger and he cried like a baby and insisted that I go back. I explained to him why I couldn't and then he looked up at me and he said 'Captain, I'll tell you why you've got to go back, but I know before I tell you that you won't believe me.'

"Then he raised himself up on his elbow and looking me in the eye he told the strangest story my ears had ever heard. 'I'm 38 years old,' he said, 'and I shipped out of St. John's. The day before I left I was married and my wife came along for a honeymoon. We sailed down around the Horn and were bound for Australia when fire broke out in the hold. We found it, but it looked bad and the whole crew took to the boats. My wife and I stayed on and we battened down the hatches. A storm came up and it was so severe that I don't think the crew in the small boats weathered it. They must have been drowned.

"We finally smothered the fire in the hold, but the boat was so badly damaged that we couldn't sail her, and so we drifted for days and days and days.

"Then, one night I felt the boat moving rapidly and I went on deck. We were going through the water at a terrific rate of speed. I called my wife and she came up and we stood there by the rail. All that night and the next day we travelled at ever increasing speed.

"Along about dusk of the second day we spotted something in the distance which we took to be land. You can imagine how excited we were.

"About four hours after dark we struck something and were knocked from our bunks. We went up on deck and there was the weirdest sight you ever saw. As far as the eye could see there was nothing but derelict ships, of all descriptions from all parts of the world.

"I lowered the ladder over the side and we climbed down. The ship we set foot on was moss from bow to stern. It was like a nightmare. We climbed over the slippery, slimy deck to another ship that was wedged tight up against it and there on the deck were several people asleep. We woke them up and tried to speak to them but they looked at us with glassy eyes and then turned over and went to sleep again.

"Later I found out that there were 107 people on this island of derelict ships, and all had gone crazy save 15!



The death of a ship.

"Just beyond I saw a large passenger steamship. The top sides were badly burned, but it was modern, and my wife and I climbed aboard. We went inside and at the after end we could see a dim light coming out of a crack in a door. We heard strange sounds which we could not understand. We went down the passageway and opened the door. The only light in the room was a candle which was burning in a far corner. There sat a white haired old man playing on a piano. The room was beautifully furnished, but over everything there was a thick coating of dust, except on the piano which was spotlessly clean. When the old man saw us, he stopped playing and ran over and got down on his knees before us. He begged for a new piano. All he wanted in the world was a new piano. Later we found out that he was a musician and was the only one who had survived on his ship. He worshipped that piano, but ten years of salt air had ruined its tone. In spite of that fact, he would play for hours each day though no one could recognize any of the tunes.

"Then we went up on deck and onto a fishing boat, where lived an old captain who had been trapped on this island for 40 years. He was one of the few who was still sane and he had managed to keep sane only by taking his watch apart and putting it together again to give his mind something to do. He had taken that old watch apart and put it together again over a thousand times.

"We couldn't help thinking that we were dreaming for it was too strange a situation for any human mind to accept. But we weren't dreaming, for we ourselves stayed on that island four years.

"One night there came up a terrific typhoon. At the time it struck I was out on board of one of the ships at the edge of our floating island, looking for food. You see, all of these ships had had big stores of food and canned things on board. There were guns, money, clothing, everything that you could want and I was out getting some things together when all of a sudden this terrific wind struck. During the storm, I just held on to whatever I could grab.

"Finally, the small fishing smack that I had boarded was torn loose and blown away from the island. I didn't want to leave my wife, but I was helpless. I hung on, hoping there might be some chance of getting back.

"I was blown about for days and days and the occasional tropical rains gave me enough fresh water to keep me alive. Then you found me. Captain, you've got to turn this boat around and go back. You've got to!

"I sat in utter amazement as this stranger completed his story. He knew that his time was short and I maintain that a man doesn't lie with his dying breath. But he no sooner finished his story than he leaned back on his pillow and five minutes later he was gone.

"That was many years ago, but sometimes at night now I wake up and there seems to be a voice saying, 'Go back to that island and see if she's still alive, waiting.' It may be imagination, I don't know, but someday I'm going back to find out."



Derelict Island

The fabled Isle of Lost Ships.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR . . .

JIM GIBBS

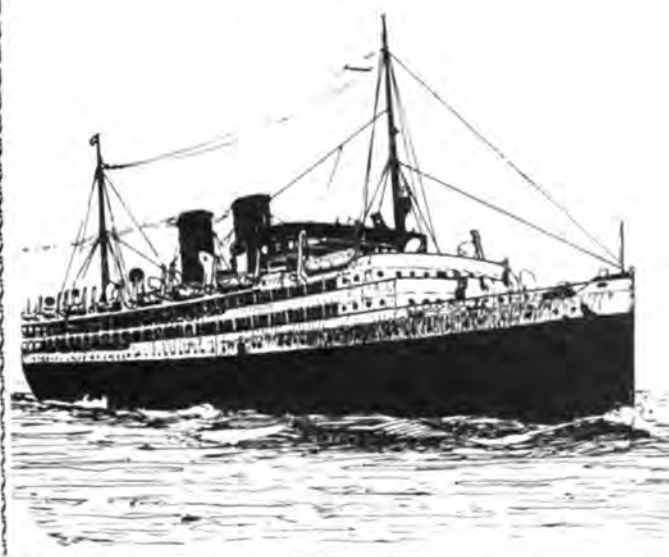
Author of "THE UNUSUAL SIDE OF THE SEA" is one of those articulate individuals whose love of the sea and ships has given us many books on sea lore and things nautical. He draws from a background of experience in the United States Coast Guard and his assignment at one of America's most lonesome outposts --- Tillamook Light, plus more than a decade as Editor of one of the worlds best known nautical publications ... The Marine Digest.

Jim Gibbs has received the "Certificate of Merit" from the Seattle Historical Society for his book 'Sentinels of the North Pacific.' Additionally, The Port of Seattle has honored him seven times with their "Anchor-Award" for outstanding maritime writing. His credentials are impeccable.

Our thanks to Author Gibbs for his literary contributions and his efforts to preserve historical memorabilia and History for posterity. We have nominated Mr. Jim Gibbs for 'Honorary Membership' in the Society of Wireless Pioneers as a token of our appreciation for his dedicated efforts.

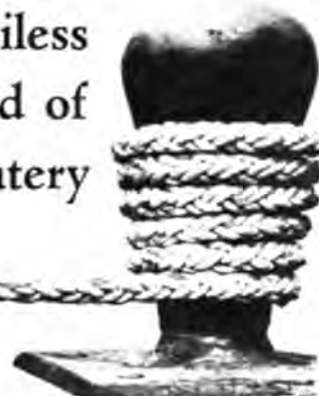
Additional stories about the "UNUSUAL SIDE OF THE SEA" from the pen of Jim Gibbs will appear in coming issues of the Society's publications. Watch for them.

William A. Breniman
President.



In fire and fog . . . in the merciless fury of winter gale . . . a world of ships and men bowed to a watery destiny

A skipper's
SEA CHEST
full of dramatic photos and stirring facts of sea toll from the Southern Capes to Norton Sound.



CAPTAIN COLUMBUS Was the voyage worth it?

By JACK MARKOWITZ
Pittsburgh Post Gazette

Dear Capt. Columbus:
Your message of Oct. 12, 1492 announcing the discovery of America, though in improper form, is acknowledged.

Please be advised that before your claim can be taken up by the Royal Office of Discoveries it will be necessary to resubmit all appropriate data in proper form.

Enclosed are three forms F-11011, titled Reports of Purported Discoveries of Large Bodies of Land (100,000 square miles or more). If you have reason to believe that America is less than 100,000 square miles in extent, you may use Short Form F-11011a. If you are in error, and America should prove to be larger than you thought, Advance Admission of Error Form F-22022 may be submitted in triplicate to this office, the Justice Department and the Commerce Department.

You will note that the first box on all these forms asks your correct name, last name first. If at any time you have been known by another name — for example, Cristobal Colon or Colombo possibly denoting birth in a foreign land, e.g. Italy — it will be necessary for you to submit three forms F-11043, Registration of a Legitimate Alias, and three certified copies of your Birth Certificate.

I direct your attention to Block 17a on Page 4, marked Working Conditions on the Voyage. It is recorded that your ships left the Port of Palos on Aug. 3 and therefore were at sea more than two months. Had you prior reason to believe the voyage would last so long? Were overtime wages paid? In what amount? Were your food stores sufficient to sustain the health of the crew for some 70 days? Was there stormy weather during which crews were ordered aloft to take in sail under less than safe conditions? Did the crew's authorized bargaining unit come forward to say, "Captain, O captain, sail home or face authorized

grievance procedure," citing the appropriate section. Any and all such occurrences must be reported in block 17a, and if there is insufficient space, please make use of Additional Explanatory Form 11043a.

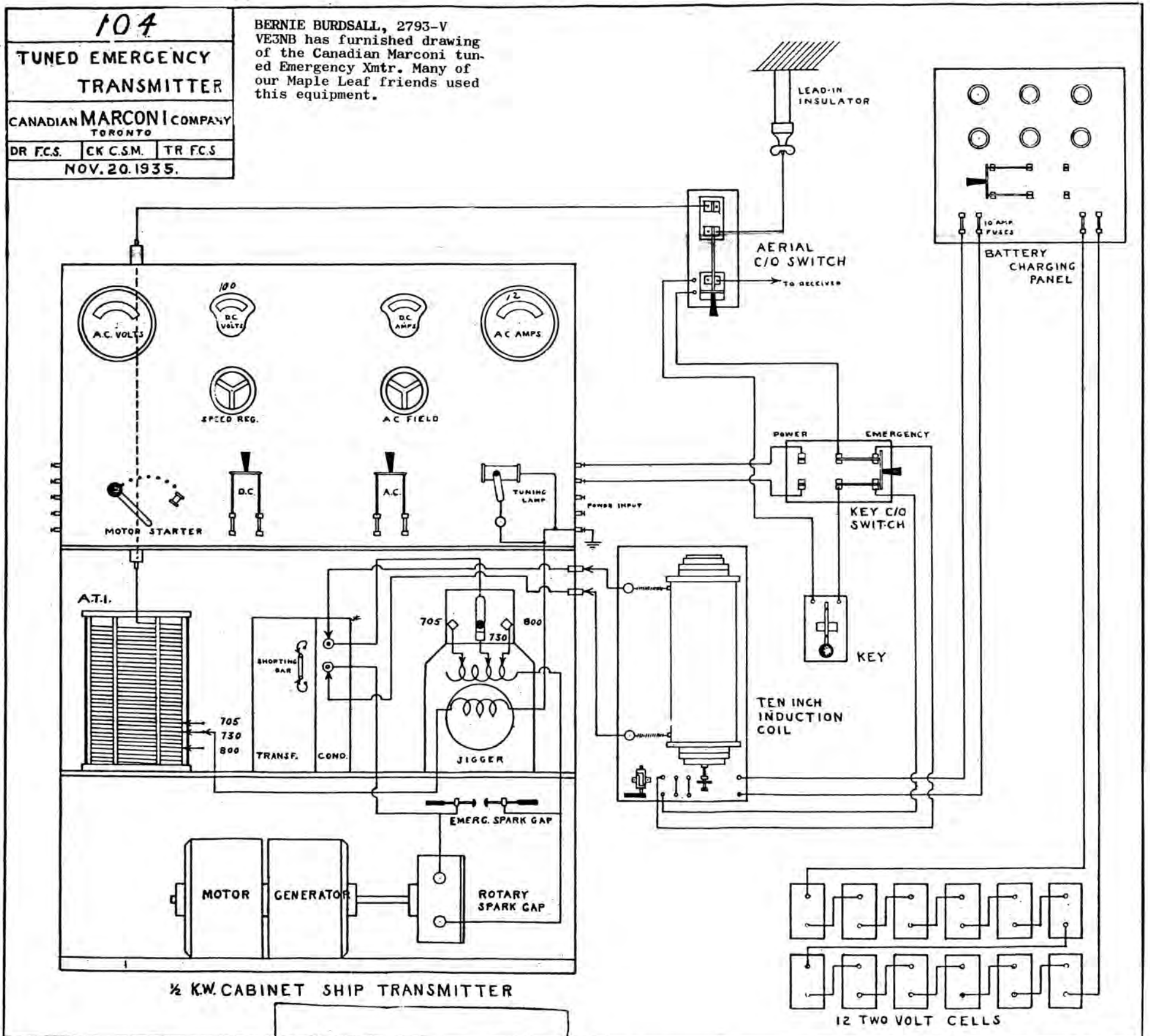
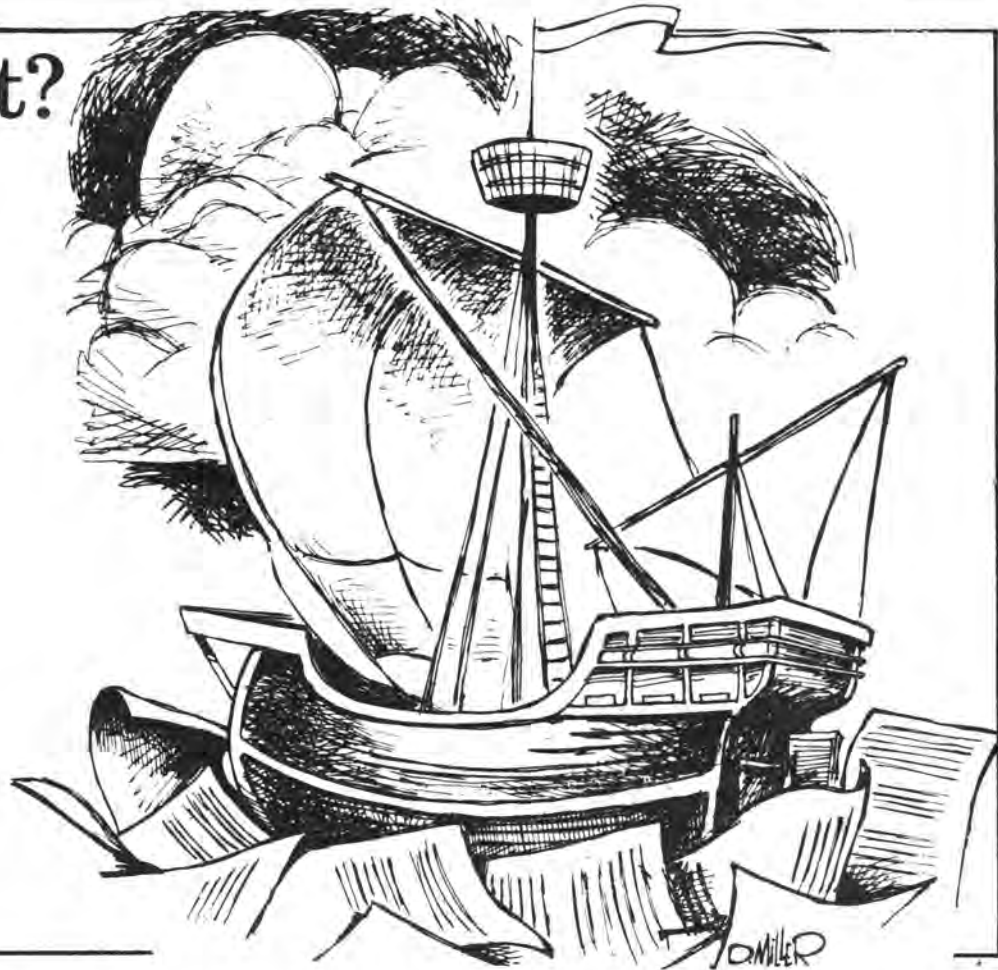
I also direct your attention to Block 53 on Page 9: Possible Prior Claims. It has been often rumored in Europe, that crews of Vikings several centuries ago discovered America in approximately the same vicinity where you claim to have discovered America. Direct performance of an investigation of such a claim is not incumbent upon other claimants under Royal Statute KP 143(e)IV; however, failure to note the possible existence of such a claim, if it should be honored in the future, would subject any other claimant, such as yourself, to loss of all titles, moneys, and honors appertaining to the alleged discovery, plus payment of interest, penalty, etc.

Should it further be the case that other human beings of whatever race or condition appear whose residence in the assertedly discovered place can be found to antedate that of another claimant — in your case, for example, to be in possession of the aforementioned land prior to 12:01 a. m. Oct. 12, 1492, their claim to the discovery may at some future date be honored by appropriate courts and/or legislatures.

In short, Senor Columbus — and I am empowered under Departmental Rule of Procedure RP11(e)V, Informal Gratuitous Comments, to say this to you — it may be that you will wish to reconsider pressing your claim to the discovery of America.

Whatever your decision, having reported that your voyage is now ended, all forms relating to Safety and Health of the Crew, Equal Opportunity Compliance Procedures, and Environmental Impact of the Asserted Discovery of Any Piece of Land Large or Small, fall due immediately and if they are not received within fifteen (15) days subsequent to Oct. 12, 1492, you are subject to treble damages listed under Royal Statutes SS 1105 etc.

Sincerely,
Royal Commissioner





PQ-17

Story of Radio Operator, William L. Smith (SOWP Member 516-P) and his experience on the SS Alcoa Ranger/WLAA which was torpedoed July 7, 1942 by U-255 in Barret Sea. Convoy PQ-17 was a desperate gamble to assist the Russians at the height of "U" boat dominance in the North Atlantic. There are two kinds of courage in war - that of "reckless gallantry" and that of quiet moral courage of the men who manned the ships and the radio rooms. Few have given as much as Member Smith to his country. He was totally paralyzed as his central nervous system was destroyed. He has lived at Sailor Snug Harbor since 1950. A salute to this gallant man. Here is his story.

VOYAGE OF THE SS ALCOA RANGER

The following information contains the facts surrounding the sinking of the S. S. Alcoa Ranger, July 7, 1942 part of Convoy "PQ"-17 on which I served as Radio Officer.

In 1940 I was in New York and I contacted the Radio Officers' Union concerning a berth on an Alumine Line Ship. They told me that I could have the S. S. Sarcoxie, but that the Port Captain would like to see me before I could be assigned. I went down to 17 Battery Place and looked up the line the Sarcoxie was affiliated with, and it was the Ocean and Dominion Steamship Company. I spoke to the Port Captain and told him what the union had instructed me to do. He told me that he always wanted to personally interview any worker that had a handicap, probably to satisfy his own curiosity as to whether or not the applicant appeared to be of good material for the Company. He asked me what was my trouble, and I told him I had "MS", Multiple Sclerosis. At that time I was using a cane and swung my right leg slightly. The Port Captain and I spoke at length, and I was hired for service on the S. S. Sarcoxie.

S.S. SARCOXIE RENAMED

I served on the S. S. Sarcoxie, registration number 217887, from October 23, 1940 to December 23, 1940. In the fall of 1940 the registration was changed from the Ocean & Dominion Steamship Line to Alcoa Steamship Company, and the Sarcoxie was renamed the U. S. Alcoa Ranger.

We made several trips to South America in which we carried a full load of Boxite from the Guinas northbound to Canada. On December 7, 1941, we were off St. Lucia Island bound for Portland, Maine, with a full cargo of Boxite for Canada. There we paid off the crew and unloaded the ship. We employed a new crew before departing to Halifax, Nova Scotia. In Nova Scotia were repainted the ship war-time gray and installed weather curtains. We then left Nova Scotia and sailed for Mobile, Alabama. After arriving in Mobile, we again paid off the crew and took on a new crew. After that time, we were instructed to travel coastwise to Philadelphia. In Philadelphia we took about a month to load, and it was known before we signed on that our destination would be Russia.

We departed Philadelphia March 12, 1942 and went up the coast to Halifax, Nova Scotia. There a convoy named "Hearts Beast" was making up, and we joined it. At the time of our joining the convoy, we were not fitted out with any guns, only blackout curtains. We spent two days at sea before approximately twelve ships were diverted to Greenland and Iceland. Our destination was the River Clyde. After reaching that point, we dropped anchor in Loch Long. There we were fitted out with two anti-aircraft guns on each wing of the bridge. These guns, I believe, were of First World War vintage, possibly 45 caliber. About six British soldiers joined the S. S. Alcoa Ranger to man the newly installed anti-aircraft guns. I was furnished with an assistant radio operator and, as I remember, one Lewis machine gun.

After spending a few days in Loch Long, we departed for Loch Ewe. There we held a sailing conference and proceeded to Iceland, arriving in Reykjavik. Several weeks were spent in Reykjavik making general repairs, including being degaussing the ship and preparing for the run to Russia.

DEPARTURE OF CONVOY PQ 17 FROM ICELAND

Convoy PQ-17 departed Iceland with forty-two ships. One freighter was grounded leaving port, and two tankers hit icebergs and had to return. This left a total of thirty-nine ships in the convoy. Our date of departure was May 20, 1942. We proceeded up the coast of Norway where we became aware of our finding by the enemy because of the fighters which were forming astern of us. However, they seemed in no hurry to engage us as that sector of the globe has twenty-four hours of sunlight during that season.

On the 4th of July they formed their attack and torpedo bombers swept through the convoy. Four loaded ships were sunk at that time. I guess this was their contribution to the celebration of the holiday.

THREAT OF THE TERPITZ

On the 5th of July, we were off Trondheim, Norway, and the pocket battleship "Terpitz" and four or five destroyers were anchored along the coast. Apparently word was received by the admiralty that the "Terpitz" was weighing anchor for sea. I would only guess that such a shudder came through the powers that be to feel that this pocket battleship would be allowed to enter the open sea and then in such a case all shipping to the United Kingdom would be in danger. The following message was received on that day, "Convoy disbursed, proceed fan-wise to destination at utmost speed." All aircraft, cruisers, destroyers, D.E.'s and other craft were rerouted off Trondheim to keep "Terpitz" in Norway and not allow any of the craft to depart to the open sea. Again we had no protection. We were on a ship with a couple of "pea shooters" and our course was to the north, a safe distance from the barrier ice. During the next twenty-four hours, ship after ship went down.

On the 6th of July, the Captain advised me to wear my best clothes and best shoes to bed. Since so many of the convoy had already been lost, our odds of being the next target were great. He further advised that I rig up the emergency transmitter so that an SOS could be on the air immediately in the event of a failure of our generator and lights. He gave

me our position, both longitude and latitude, on the hour throughout the night. We all slept in our lifejackets that night.

TORPEDOED

On the 7th of July we were torpedoed on the starboard side, forward in the number two hatch. As the captain had prepared me, I immediately sent the SOS with our location and proceeded to the lifeboats. As the ship slowly went down by the bow, we began casting the lifeboats with as many crew members as possible. The second mate, Mr. McKinney, was in charge of our lifeboat and ordered one of the boys to get the Lewis machine gun and a compass from the bridge, along with a few reels of ammunition.

As we cast off, we looked forward and noticed a weather cloth and framework coming out of the ocean. Much to our amazement, we found it to be the U-Boat which had torpedoed us. As we approached the sub, their spokesman asked us the following questions:

- Q. What is the name of your ship?
A. The S. S. Alcoa Ranger.
- Q. Where are you from?
A. New York
- Q. Where are you bound?
A. Murmaski
- Q. What was your cargo?
A. General
- Q. Is the captain aboard your boat?
A. No sir.
- Q. Which boat is the captain in?
A. We do not know.
- Q. Have you sufficient food and water aboard?
A. Yes sir.

With that they pointed in the direction of land. However, by that time we were able to take a bearing on the compass and knew that it would be about thirty or forty miles to land. We then rigged a small square sail and put away the oars. After the course was set, the sail did the work. After a while the submarine again came afloat to determine the situation of the sinking Alcoa Ranger. Apparently they decided to assist its sinking by firing shells from their deck gun. After five or six shells into the side of the ship below the waterline, she soon started to fill and sink. The nose went first and the stern was the last to go down with the American flag being the last vestige of the ship to sink.

Countless thoughts went through our minds at that time. We were thirteen men adrift in the Arctic Ocean in a lifeboat. In my case, the Alcoa had been my home for the past two years and many little things that I owned were lost with her sinking. Chief among these personal objects was a pet cat which I had not been able to find before departing in the lifeboat.

NOVIAZEMBLA

After several hours we arrived at Noviazembla. We entered the island at a point where we were above the tree line, so it was mostly rock, gravel and moss. Another boat from the ship joined us there. We then looked the land over as much as possible and brought the lifeboats on land so that they might not be washed away. We rigged a fence and gathered driftwood for a fire. After the fire was made and we had rigged a wind-break, we cooked biscuits, ham and hot cocoa which was on the lifeboat.

A Laplander came along, who didn't speak any English, and joined us in our feast. Through a series of hand signals, we learned from him that a town was about twelve miles down the coast. We enjoyed the fire as much as we could and decided it would be best to rest before starting off for the village. Our new-found friend departed.

In the morning we awoke to the foggy air and the smoke from our so-called fire. We placed our lifeboats in the water and rode a short distance off shore. We again rigged our small sail and hit the prevailing wind with our course set down the coast. We sailed down the coast for approximately twelve miles and spotted the settlement the Laplander had told us about. Unfortunately, we were unable to tack and had to land approximately three miles past the entrance to the village. Again we hauled the boat ashore and several of the younger members of the crew walked inland to report our landing. The rest of the crew busily prepared our new camp site. There was no wood in the area, and we had to make the best of it on damp ground.

In the morning, the members of our crew who had headed for the settlement returned with two or three Russians. They brought a few loaves of bread and gave us each a slice or two. The second mate had a small caliber revolver, and they made it perfectly clear that they were interested in owning it. When he gave it to them, they were quite pleased. All of the crew, except one other crew member and myself, accompanied these men to the settlement. We were unable to walk the distance and remained near the boat, sleeping on the ground once again.

About ten o'clock the next morning a small tug came out and anchored off shore because of some engine trouble. The other fellow and I spent the night aboard the tug, and we set out on the tug for the settlement early the next morning.

In the fishing village we found that money was worthless. These people dealt in goods, not money. If you wanted anything, you had to barter with the inhabitants. Also in the village was a female doctor and a few nurses. They came aboard the tug and examined the other fellow and myself. They were equipped with a Russian/English language dictionary, through which we conversed. The doctor was very interested in my case. Unfortunately, they were compelled to discharge us prematurely as there were a number of badly injured cases coming in from the ships on the convoy.

I was once again placed on a tug with other seamen that were put aboard for the purpose of making contact with the S. S. Empire Tide, a British Royal Mail Ship, which was about 100 miles up the coast. Shortly after boarding the mail ship, I learned that they had been warned by the SOS I had sent from the sinking S. S. Alcoa Ranger and immediately turned about

and sped up the coast to a cove in order to escape being torpedoed. Our stay on this ship was most pleasant, and our lifeboat was towed astern of the tug with the second mate handling the tiller.

When we first sighted the S. S. Empire Tide, they had launched their boats and the captain came out to introduce himself. He gave us a very good description of the facts of the case. He said that they had taken provisions for two months in Liverpool and that they had been out three months. They had already taken on about two hundred survivors of the convoy and were worried because there were not enough provisions. However, we were invited aboard to share whatever there was.

We came aside of the S. S. Empire Tide where there was a Jacobs ladder to climb aboard. Because of my inability to climb up the ladder, I was hoisted aboard with the lifeboat. It was decided that I would be best off placed in the ship's hospital where I could have easy access to the toilet. There were four bunks and a table in the hospital, and it was quite comfortable. However, the honeymoon was over when another lifeboat was picked up containing survivors of the S. S. Polis Potter. They were out of Rotterdam and left Holland before the Germans came in. The ship was then in England and they could not return home. Many of these men had been in the water. Gangrene had set in many of their fingers and toes. Several of them were placed in the hospital with me, and unless you have personally smelled flesh rotting with gangrene, you could not imagine the stench.

After a few days had passed, we all became very familiar with the ship. I would judge that we had taken aboard approximately three hundred fifty men. The captain called everyone mid-ship and announced that they were carrying too many men for the safety of everyone. Since submarines had been torpedoing everything in sight, the consequences would be catastrophic if we were hit. Therefore, he decided that all able survivors would be taken ashore in lifeboats and told to shift for themselves. He would bring coffee, tea, biscuits and whatever available each morning if the weather permitted. We were also warned that the water supply was deficient and that the boat could not spare water for bathing or the like. Therefore, if your friend tells you your stench is unbearable, come aboard ship for a shower.

ARCHANGEL AND A SHOWER !

A few days passed before orders came through for all of us to come aboard ship again. We then weighed anchor and followed a Russian ice-breaker down the coast into the White Sea and then down a small stretch of water until we arrived at a dock in Archangel. There we were immediately interviewed by a Russian Authority.

The next move was for everyone to take showers and receive attention as required. If injured or sick, there were several rows of special showers which were attended by Russian women. While I was there a friend of mine from the S. S. John Weatherspoon came along and gave the lady a pair of longhanded underwear, and he told me that when I was cleaned up he would be waiting outside and was making arrangements for assisting me. He and several others were rigged up in a hospital and apparently had a chap in the bunch that they did not get along with. Therefore, he contacted an interpreter and presented his ideas. If all was well, they would give him a fond farewell and I would take his place. There was some discussion among the men in the hospital as to whether I was worthy to join their company. After I disclosed the contents of a small bag I had been carrying since the torpedoing of the S. S. Alcoa Ranger, I was immediately accepted. Inside the bag were cigarettes, matches and toilet paper. The latter item was deemed quite precious as the Russians did not have such comforts.

We were next moved to a hospital in Archangel to assist us with all medical complaints. After eating oatmeal for a few days, all in the hospital decided they would walk down to the dining room and make ourselves comfortable, but not eat until the Commissar was advised of our situation. After this incidence, our meals immediately improved, to the point that we received three tickets a day for meals and one ticket for a generous ration of vodka.

Toilet facilities in the hospital were deplorable. Only two or three of the toilets, out of six or eight, were operable. Luckily, one of the Americans was able to salvage parts from a couple of the broken toilets and fix the majority of the others.

After a short period in the hospital, all the units were sent to a hotel in downtown Archangel. We now only awaited repatriation to the U.S.A. Delegates were selected from each unit to handle any and all complaints. We also decided on a lottery system for selection of the order in which the units would be repatriated. I am happy to say that our unit was selected as the second unit to exit Russia.





U.S.S. TUSCALOOSA ARRIVES

Our greatest day was when the American cruiser Tuscaloosa was in Colar Bay, Russia with hospital supplies. They decided that between them and five or six destroyers, they would be able to take out about four hundred survivors.

I was given a lift from the hotel to the waterfront. There I boarded the H.M.S. Middleton, a small British destroyer of the Persian Gulf variety. We slept on the deck in the mess hall and ate our meals in a like manner. When we arrived at the site of the Tuscaloosa, some of the survivors aboard the "tin can" were placed in some of the destroyer escorts. I was put aboard the Tuscaloosa. This ship was rigged for our assistance and in order to do that the upper bridge on the starboard side was for the Master of the ship. He in turn gave his suite to thirty-six officers. The admiral's quarters were on the port side of the ship. Since there was no admiral aboard at that time, his quarters were provisioned for us also.

We left Colar Bay and proceeded westward to the North Cape of Norway, then down the coast of Norway where we intercepted a German freighter laying mines. We then dispatched some destroyers and they fired on the freighter with anti-aircraft guns and picked off many of the enemy. After pulling as many survivors as we could find out of the water, we departed and shaped our course for Iceland. There we took on fuel from a station on the western side of the island and headed for the mouth of the Clyde. There a small hospital ship came along side. We had many men aboard the cruiser with loss of both arms and some with loss of one or more legs. I would estimate that we had at least twenty men who had both arms and both legs amputated.

All men unable to board the hospital ship were placed on stretchers and hauled aboard the hospital ship. The executive officer on the cruiser ordered me onto one of the stretchers, and I joined the others. When we arrived on the hospital ship we were placed in layers, much like a baker would place bread in an oven. After all were aboard, we headed up the Clyde River for about five miles and were transported on the stretchers into ambulances and headed up the coast to a hospital.

INSTANT "CANADIAN"

The young lady that was in the ambulance that I took was a WREN. The lady driving was also in the service. Although I asked them to stop at a pub for a beer, they laughed and said we were in a convoy and couldn't stop. I found out the "convoy" was headed for Higher Myer Hospital in Scotland, eighteen miles from Glasgow. As soon as my partner in the ambulance found out we were headed for Scotland, he created quite a fuss and insisted he was from London and he would not stay in Scotland. Upon arriving at the hospital, I excused myself from their argument and went in the hospital. There an American sailor and I began talking and he advised me not to tell anyone I was an American, or I'd never get home. All the doctors in the hospital were from Canada. Therefore, I told him to forget that I was from Brooklyn Heights, and I told everyone I was Canadian.

After being examined by a doctor, I was told I would only be staying in Scotland for a day or so. All the doctors entrusted me with mementoes to bring home to their families and phone numbers and addresses to contact their loved ones.

After leaving the hospital, we were sent to the Biersford Hotel in Glasgow. We remained there probably a week and then were placed in buses and carried to a dock along the Clyde to be placed in a small boat. This boat took us along side the S. S. Siboney, which was an old Ward Line ship. We went aboard this vessel and all men were from the Murmansk run and the Malta Run. The chief engineer and I had been shipmates previously with the captain of the Siboney, so that made it very nice for all of us.

The convoy was headed by the battleship New York of the First World War, five or six destroyers, and one passenger ship (which carried the evacuees). We made good time, approximately 17 to 18 knots all the way until we got near New York. At that time the destroyers broke away for Philadelphia. We docked on Staten Island and most of us went from there to Brooklyn and Manhattan. Our landing date was September 15, 1942.

TIC TAC TOE WITH TNT

On November 16, 1942 we signed on our next ship, the S. S. Alcoa Voyager. We loaded with war supplies and ammunition in Brooklyn and sailed in convoy to French Morocco. We arrived in Casablanca on New Year's night in 1943. Upon our arrival we were faced with an air-raid. Since our ship was confined to the area set aside for all munition ships, we weathered out the air-raid among all the ships laddened with TNT and shells. Having been fortunate enough to live through the air-raid, we unloaded our cargo and took on another cargo of cobalt for ballest and departed for New York. Our arrival date in New York was February 8, 1943.

On April 20, 1943 I signed on for the S. S. Alcoa Banner which was carrying war supplies bound for Belim, up the Amazon River. We visited other ports along the coast of Brazil carrying cement for the making of runways for the bomber command. We later went to Recife where we unloaded army supplies at Camp Ingram. It took us approximately twenty days to unload, then a convoy from Recife took us up the coast and in the midst of an alert off Natal. A ship that was torpedoed rammed us and raked us a little above the water line and we had to go in the Port of Spain in Trinidad for repairs. We then loaded Boxite for New York and arrived there August 4, 1943.

During the series of accidents while with the Alcoa Steamship Co., my physical condition deteriorated slowly, and I decided to discontinue service with Alcoa.

My main question regarding the period of my service to the Alcoa Steamship Co. is if there was any insurance available to the men while on the trip to Russia? When we loaded in Philadelphia in April of 1942, the Russian government had as their agent the firm of Amtorg. I feel that they would easily be able to assist you in matters concerning the trip to Russia.

While in Philadelphia, the Russian government, through Amtorg, informed us what we could expect in Russia. For instance, no money was necessary, and we would receive food and shelter, plus other assistance such as free admission to the theatres, free hair cuts, and any assistance we needed with regard to obtaining wearing apparel, shoes and medical attention. I wish to state that all these items were supplies as required. Also Amtorg inspected life boats and provided us with fur coats, fur hats, shoes and stockings at no expense to us.

When we departed Iceland, one freighter went aground, two tankers hit icebergs and had to return to port, and twenty-seven of the thirty-nine ships in convoy PQ-17 went down through enemy action, including the S.S. Alcoa Ranger. The loss of lives of men on this convoy totalled 152 men and a multitude of permanent injuries to the survivors.

When we were given orders that convoy PQ-17 was to be disbursed and to proceed fanwise to destination at utmost speed, this action placed us in a most dangerous situation. We had no protection whatsoever. There was no stern gun mounted on our ship, only black-out curtains and a couple of "pea-shooters". When we were picked up by the S. S. Tuscaloosa, they told us that the cruiser almost mutinied when they realized that twenty or more fully loaded merchant ships were proceeding without any protection against enemy subs and planes. It was then that we knew for certain that someone had blundered and that we were sitting ducks.

GOD BLESS "SNUG HARBOR"

Although I did not die in the action, I was soon to realize that I would be totally paralyzed as my central nervous system was destroyed by multiple sclerosis. In late 1948, I made application to Sailor Snug Harbor for entry, and in February of 1950 the trustees of Sailor Snug Harbor accepted my application. I came into the Harbor unable to walk in a wheel chair knowing that would be my status for the rest of my life.

I am profoundly grateful to Almighty God and to Sailor Snug Harbor for what they have done for me. For without their assistance, I would have been dead years ago.



PS:



NIKOLA TESLA

Imaginary "Postscripts"

Imagine if you will, the 'Ancient Mariner' writing to some of the great men of Wireless History (in their time slot), over the centuries.

The replies have been returned and attached to each is a "POST-SCRIPT" -- an after thought to clarify and elucidate on some moot point overlooked in his letter. We hope you enjoy them (*).

Very Truly Yours,
G. Marconi.

PS: My name is MARCONI -- macaroni is something to eat !

Sincerely
Thomas A. Edison

PS: I never could get that dog to mind me !

Respectfully,
Nikola Tesla

PS: Don't believe that lightning never strikes twice in the same place - Come see me some day.

Very Sincerely
R. Hertz.

PS: Yes - if you touch the spark-gap it really hurts.

Appreciatively yours,
Benjamin Franklin

PS: Indeed - flying a kite can be quite a shocking experience !

Yours
R. A. Heising

PS: I have never been to China, and my name is NOT Hei Sing !

Regards,
R. M. Heintz

PS: Sorry OM, but I made vacuum tubes, not catsup.

(*) Idea - Bill Breniman, Postscripts - Herb Scott.

GUGLIELMO SLEPT HERE

The tiny village of Poldhu sits half a mile back from the edge of a cliff in the extreme southwest corner of England. Between the village and the Atlantic Ocean is a large field providing good grazing for a herd of cattle. But this is no ordinary farmer's field; this one is studded with large concrete anchor blocks and bases, arranged in symmetrical patterns and sprouting the rusty remains of huge bolts and threaded studs. There is also the remains of the foundations and tiled flooring of an unusual building which once stood on this bleak and windswept cliff-top. For it was from here that Guglielmo Marconi arranged to have the first transatlantic messages transmitted on Thursday, December 12, 1901.

My father lives quite nearby, and two of my sons and I visited him last summer; local tourist maps simply note "Marconi Monument" in that area, so we set out to see what remained.

The locals, what few there are, pay little attention to this historic site and we had difficulty in locating it. Finally, a car-park attendant thought that if we walked a quarter of a mile along the cliff-top beyond the Poldhu Hotel we might see it.

After working so many years for the Marconi Company it was something of an emotional experience to wander around where the great man had conducted his experiments.

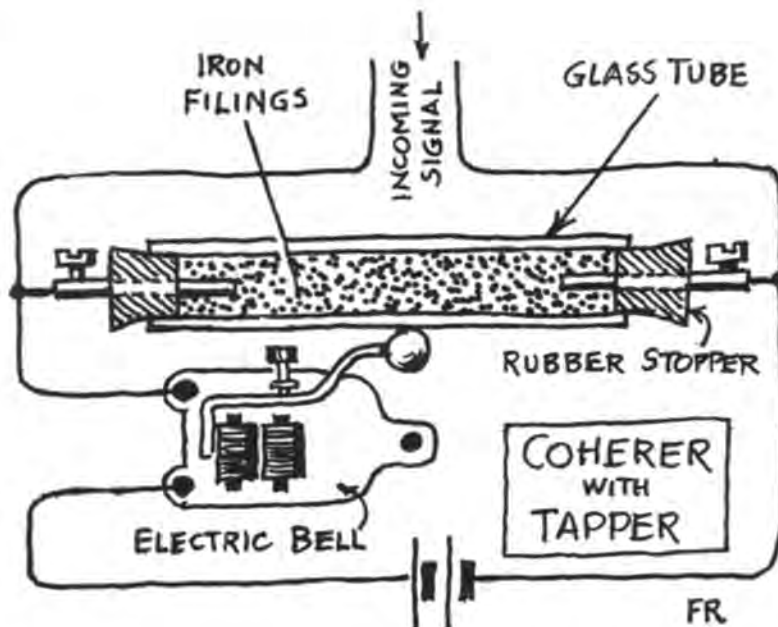
All that remains of the transmitter room are pieces of the walls and some red tiled floors. It is possible to see where the 35 HP oil engine sat, due to the substantial flooring and surrounding troughing. The oil engine was used to drive a 50 cycle alternator which produced 25 KW at 2000 volts. Transmission was by spark gap coupled to the huge antenna system. Now blackberry bushes and grass intrude into the building remains. Cattle are not respecters of historic property either...

Not too far away is the old and rambling Poldhu Hotel. I should have asked them when it was built, but it was certainly there in 1901, which was just as well, otherwise Marconi may have had to sleep in the village. The hotel contains many old photographs of the site, showing various transmitter antenna configurations. Numerous structures were blown down and were replaced generally by a different design.

The receptionist was happy to show me the guest book for 1901, (imagine!) and was able to find "G. Marconi, Bologna, Italy" for June 6th. If I'd had time I could probably have found a few more interesting signatures; no doubt his assistants Kemp and Paget also stayed there, as well as Dr. Ambrose Fleming who designed the station.

If anyone is interested in more details of these fascinating days of early radio, Mrs. Benjamin has a little booklet in the library, entitled "Cornwall's Conquest of the Skies" which contains pictures and schematic diagrams. As for me, I want to go back to the Poldhu Hotel and look through that guest book.

Keith L. Robinson
Telecoms Engineering Lab.



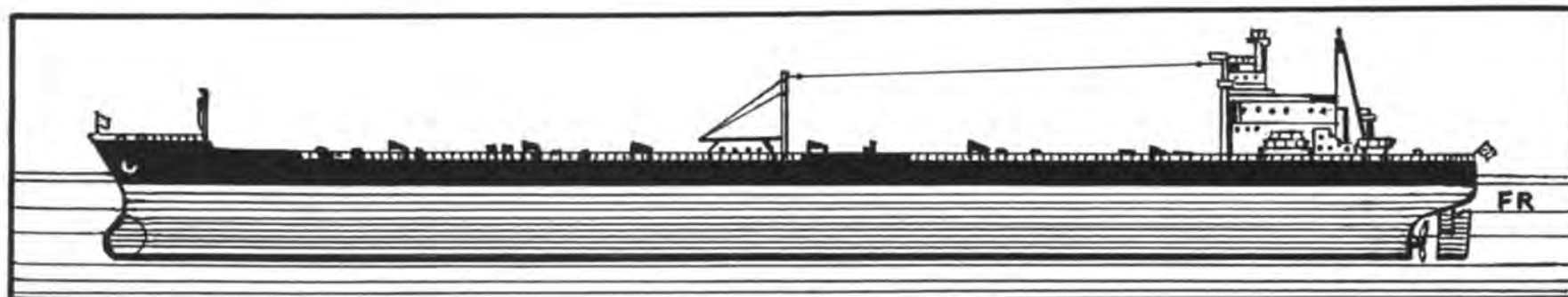
SUPER TANKER



DRAWINGS FROM PEN OF FRED ROSEBURY



COHERER





People



BOB WHITEHEAD
2948-M
VIA - Melbourne



DEXTER S. BARTLETT
145-SGP



DAVID A. SMITH - VE7DBJ
Sec. Treas. Chapter XVI



DONALD T. WRIGHT - Shown at Operating position of the CAA-ARS at Drummond, Montana (1937-1960). All modes used including CW code - Teletype - Broadcast. Dave now lives at Lamar Missouri. His call is WØHH.



HANS BUEHLER, R/O on the MS ARIANA Swiss Flag Ship. Call is HBDG. Hans MM call is HB9XJ/MM.



T. W. BRAIDWOOD

"Tom" Braidwood was CHOP on the Yacht CAROLINE/KFZD circa 1931-33. This is Tom in the Radio shack of the Yacht.

FCC GROUP: L/R - Geo. K. Strom, Chicago (AE); Harold E. Allen, St. Paul (EIC) Kent G. Crawford, Chicago (RD); James P. Stephens Jr. Cincinnati Dist. (EIC); Irby C. Tallant, Rochester, Mi. (EIC) Detroit R/O). Legend: EIC Engr. in Chg., (AE) Ass't. Engr. (RD) Regional Director.



WALTER BAUMGARTNER 297-P
R/O. SS Admiral Peoples/WJEI
Circa 1930-33.



FCC (VIP'ers) Visit "Joe" Pavek's "Wonderful Museum of Wireless" in Minneapolis. (See Left)

picture page



SOCIETY OF WIRELESS PIONEERS

NOTE TO MEMBERS. We need pictures—please send pictures of yourself, your ship, or anything of real interest for these pages.



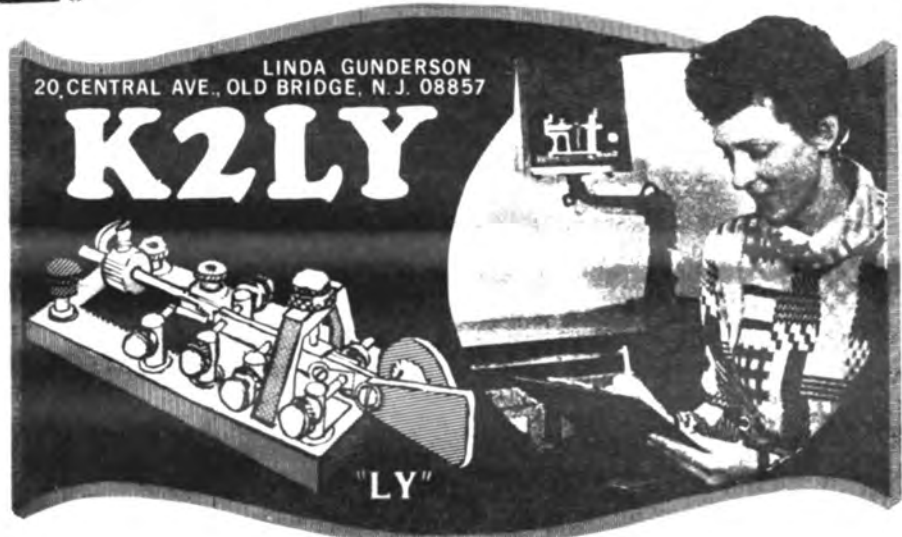
Communications news ... in pictures ...



Olive J. Roeckner R/O on M.S. Siranger/LIMK circa 1947. She now lives in Kalso, B.C. Has Amateur call VE7ERA. SOWP # 2891-V



KEITH SINGER - 3044-P
Taken on boat deck of SS. City of Los Angeles / KOZC
Keith said this ship from 1929-1930.



ELLIS H. SMELLIE - 2650- SENIOR-SGP.
This Grand Old Timer from Australia (Blackburn) was first assigned at "Thursday Island, Queensland in 1912) He has served on 35 plus ships over the years and many important shore stations. Over 64 years as a telegrapher.



VAHAN KAPAGAIN
3277-M
N8AWH



JAMES E. KITCHIN
84-SGP



A RENDEZVOUS WITH FATE



Robert Lee Simpson

1942—WARRANT OFFICER, RADIO ELECTRICIAN, USNR

This is the story, told by one of our members, of his experience during the holocaust at Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941 recounting his action and thoughts on this day of 'infamy'. Lt. Cmdr. Robert L. Simpson (USNR-RET) joined the Society in 1968 as one of our Charter Members (52-SGP). The Society and its members are justly proud of "Bob" Simpson, who in 1941 was the Assistant Radio Officer aboard the USS ARGONNE, Flagship of Rear Adm. W.L. Calhoun, USN, Commander Base Force U.S. Pacific Fleet. Bob Simpson's action and dedication to duty during this great emergency won the admiration of all brother radio men who knew him. We are grateful to Bob for furnishing this 'first hand' narrative (at our request) of his experience on this fateful day. We are proud of Brother "Bob" for maintaining the tradition of our craft and the heritage of all pioneer radio/wireless men.

0755 7 DECEMBER 1941

"HONK - HONK - HONK" SOUNDED THE BATTLE ALARM, AS JUNIOR OFFICER OF THE DECK CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER L.E. GRAY, SHOUTED AS HE DASHED THROUGH THE PASSAGE WAY, ABOARD U.S.S. ARGONNE (AGC-31) COMMUNICATION FLAGSHIP, COMMANDER BASE FORCE U.S. PACIFIC FLEET, AT PEARL HARBOR, REAR ADMIRAL W.L. CALHOUN, USN, 1010 DOCK. "THE JAPANESE ARE ATTACKING!! ALL HANDS, MAN YOUR BATTLE STATIONS, ON THE DOUBLE!!" THE BUGLER WAS SOUNDING GENERAL QUARTERS, AS ALL HANDS RUSHED TO THEIR BATTLE STATIONS! TIME 0755; DATE 7 DECEMBER 1941. I GRABBED MY CAP AND DASHED DOWN THE PASSAGE WAY AFT TO MY BATTLE STATION IN THE TRANSMITTER ROOM!

Serving aboard USS Argonne, my wife, Winnie and the children, Nancy and Patricia, remained in San Francisco since I had been assigned sea duty with the U.S. Pacific Fleet.

It was Sunday, December 7, 1941 and the U.S. Pacific Fleet had returned to their base at Pearl Harbor after a week at sea conducting gunnery exercises in the Hawaiian area.

During September 1941, the Argonne in company with the carrier Enterprise and other ships of the fleet returned to Long Beach, California for a short visit. Uncle Harry Roberts, Winnie and Nancy visited the Argonne while we were anchored at Long Beach. Patricia, who was only two years old, stayed in San Francisco with her nurse.

When I said goodbye to my wife at Long Beach, little did I realize that I was sailing into the holocaust of Pearl Harbor.

Argonne was the flagship of Rear Admiral W.L. Calhoun, USN, Commander Base Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet. The ship's commanding officer was Commander E.W. Connor, USN, and I was the ship's Asst. Radio Officer, assistant to the flagship radio officer.

Fortunately for us, the Argonne was berthed at 1010 dock, Pearl Harbor; the longest dock in the Navy yard. Aircraft carriers Enterprise and Saratoga were normally berthed at this dock. We were on the opposite side of the dock berthed with destroyers Jarvis and Mugford and were right in the center of the Navy yard.

Cruiser Helena and Mine Layer Oglala were berthed at the same dock a few hundred feet from the Argonne. We were several hundred yards from the Navy air field at Ford Island. Eighty-two units of the Pacific Fleet were anchored at Pearl Harbor.

The battle ships Nevada, Arizona, Tennessee, West Virginia, Maryland, Oklahoma, and California were anchored off Ford Island Navy Air Base. Cruisers, destroyers, submarines and auxiliaries lay at the various docks and anchorages. The battle ship Pennsylvania and two destroyers, Cassin and Downes, were in one large drydock.



Picture #1 - Crew members as they abandoned ship. USS Argonne (AG-31)

GENERAL QUARTERS - ALL HANDS MAN YOUR BATTLE STATIONS - THE JAPANESE ARE ATTACKING. . . !



USS ARGONNE IS INDICATED BY BLACK ARROW, IN-BOARD OF 1010 DOCK. DESTROYERS ARE SHOWN ALONGSIDE. USS OGLALA, MINE SWEEPER IS ALONGSIDE USS HELENA, LIGHT CRUISER, BOTH SHIPS WERE TORPEDOED, HOWEVER HELENA BY CLOSING ALL WATER-TIGHT COMPARTMENTS REMAINED IN ACTION. OGLALA WAS TOWED BY NAVY YARD TUGS DOWN DOCK DIRECTLY OPPOSITE ARGONNE, WHERE SHE SANK RAPIDLY. HER SUPERSTRUCTURE CRASHED OVER ON TO THE DOCK, MAKING IT NECESSARY FOR ALL HANDS TO REMOVE WRECKAGE FROM DOCK, SO THAT ALL THE AMBULANCES AND OTHER EMERGENCY VEHICLES COULD GET THRU, TO REMOVE THE DEAD AND INJURED. THIS WAS THE CENTRAL AREA FOR ALL RESCUE AND SALVAGE OPERATIONS.

Admiral Calhoun and most of his staff lived ashore in Honolulu. The ship's captain, Commander F.W. Connor, and the executive officer, Lieut. Commander R.P. Noisat, USN, were also ashore in Honolulu. The ship's medical officer, Commander R.C. Satterlee, USN (MC), happened at this critical moment to be playing golf in Honolulu. The ship's dental officer, Lieut. (JG) J.N. Lane (DC) was aboard.

My old ship mate, Commissioned Warrant Officer, L.E. Gray, USN, had the duty as the officer of the deck, with myself scheduled to relieve him as officer of the deck at eight bells, 12 noon.

On this fatal morning, many members of the crew were ashore in Honolulu, as well as most of the married officers, who were with their families.

The Pacific Fleet, and the U.S. Army stationed in the Hawaiian Islands, had been alerted with orders to take precautions against local sabotage. Two Japanese ambassadors negotiated with the State Department in Washington, D.C.

The Japanese government had forwarded an ultimatum to the United States through the Japanese embassy in Washington. The embassy delayed the translation and delivery to the State Department.

Aboard flagship USS Argonne (AGC-31), we were equipped with eight radio transmitters, and a crew of approximately fifty radio men and technicians, covering the various fleet frequencies, with several radio receivers.

Admiral Yamamoto, Commander in Chief of the Japanese Imperial Fleet, had directed Vice Admiral Nagumo to attack Pearl Harbor with a task force of 31 ships. This striking force was steaming toward Pearl Harbor at full speed. Moving down from the north so as to avoid the regular steamer routes to Honolulu.

This striking force consisted of six fleet carriers, a screening force of two fast battleships, two heavy cruisers, one light cruiser and nine destroyers; An advance patrol unit of three submarines and a fleet train of eight oil tankers.

When the Japanese striking force had reached a point two hundred miles north of Pearl Harbor, 353 planes were launched for the attack. The Japanese pilots were all veterans of three years combat experience in the Chinese-Japanese war and especially trained for this mission.

The first wave consisted of 183 planes. Eighty-nine high level bombers carrying 800 kilogram bombs (1760 pounds), armor piercing, for the battleships. Forty torpedo planes were carrying torpedoes to launch against the battleships. Fifty-one carrier dive bombers, each carrying 250 kilogram (550 pound) bombs, and a fighter escort of forty-three of the famous zero planes for low level strafing attack on the ships at Pearl Harbor. The fighters were equipped with 7.7 mm machine guns.

Back at Pearl Harbor, the navy chaplains prepared to conduct church services on the various ships, and nobody knew that the Japanese planes were already winging their way to Pearl Harbor at full throttle.

The time was 0755 Honolulu standard time. The navy yard signal tower had hoisted the blue "prep" signal flag with all ships standing by for morning colors.

Aboard Argonne, the bugler was standing by on the stern ready to sound colors. The officer of the deck was forward on the quarter deck with the boatswain's mate and the messenger boy. Promptly at 0800 the colors were hoisted and the bugler sounded colors.

I was in my cabin on the main deck, having previously been awakened by our mess boy, a native of the island of Guam. I had just put on my white uniform coat when I suddenly heard several terrific explosions which rocked the ship.

I had been following the Japanese negotiations in Washington by reading the local papers and realized that anything was liable to happen at this critical time. My first thought was that we had been attacked by the Japanese because of the sound of the exploding torpedo.

Commissioned Warrant Officer Gray, the officer of the deck, dashed through the passageway shouting, "General quarters, all hands man your battle stations, the Japs are attacking!!!" The bugler was sounding general quarters and there was a critical rush through the passageways to the battle stations.

The Japanese knew that we tested the general alarm system at 0800 every morning, therefore it was useless for sounding general quarters for battle stations.

I grabbed my cap and dashed out of the cabin and headed down the passageway for the main radio room, transmitting station aft.

All hands ran at top speed to their battle stations. I collided with a few men on my way to the radio room. Some men only had time to put on their shorts and shoes in their mad rush to battle stations. The uniform for the day was white shorts and undershirts, which caused many sailors to suffer severe flash burns from exploding shells and bombs. The British Navy furnished their sailors with special battle dress, a cover-all type of uniform which provides protection from flash burns.

I almost stumbled over a pile of Sunday morning newspapers scattered across the passageway with the headlines, "President Roosevelt To Speak To The Nation." The Japanese had already spoken! And how!!!

As I scrambled through the water-tight door onto the after well deck, I was amazed to find the harbor covered with low flying Japanese planes with their red-tipped wings, flying about ten feet above the water, dropping their torpedoes and pulling up sharply to clear the masts of the battleships.

Six torpedo planes had already made their runs on the California directly opposite us, on our port side. Great clouds of smoke poured from her hull as the torpedoes tore into the ship tearing open huge holes in the side of the ship allowing the water to rush into her compartments. The force of the torpedo explosions was so great, that it tore the heavy armor belt off the ship's side.

The California slowly sank as the torpedoes continued to crash through the ship, entering her passageways killing crew members as they abandoned ship.

Oklahoma, only a few yards astern of California, was hit by six more torpedo planes. The port side armor belt of heavy steel was torn off by the exploding torpedoes, exposing a large gaping hole in the side of the ship about two-hundred feet long. The water-tight compartments had been left open for Saturday inspection and had not been closed. The water rushed into her compartments and she immediately capsized and went down with all hands within ten minutes. Her crew were trapped like rats in a trap.

Later, navy yard crews climbed aboard the overturned hull and cut holes through the bottom of the ship in an effort to rescue the men who were trapped below in her double bottom compartments.

Cutting torches were used at first, but had to be abandoned because the trapped men were being cremated by the flames from the cutting torches. Air drills were then used to gain entry into the double bottom compartments. Oklahoma suffered severe casualties.

The Navy Department announced later that indications were found inside the ship, that three men had lived for sixteen days. They had consumed all their emergency rations and had marked a calendar with an "X" for each day from December 7th to December 23rd.

Wedged in between the California and Oklahoma and Maryland, was the navy oil tanker Neosho, loaded with high octane aviation gasoline for the navy planes based at Ford Island.

Navy yard tugs came alongside the tanker and pulled her away from the sinking ships. The Jap fighters continued to fly low over the ships strafing the crews with machine gun fire. They covered the entire harbor flying among the ships with their machine guns blazing. I can still see the machine gun slugs tearing into the dock we were alongside, as the zero fighters roared by in a hail of machine gun fire.

West Virginia was also hit by torpedo planes during the first attack. A large hole was torn out of her port side and she quickly sank to the bottom of the harbor, with many crew members below decks unable to escape. The Japanese 800 kilogram bombs had torn through the top of the main battery turrets killing the entire gun crews. One bomb dropped down through the large forward cage mast and exploded in the crews galley killing the galley crew.

At this time our guns were still silent. All ammunition had been removed from the ready boxes beside each gun position and sent below decks to the magazines as customary when a ship arrived in port during peace time. It took several minutes before the magazines could be opened and ammunition carried to the guns. All hands were pressed into service making up bandoleers for our machine guns.

We opened up with everything we had, except the five-inch guns which were for surface targets only.

Within our close group of ships, the noise was deafening! The destroyers alongside went into action with their three and four inch guns. Their .50 caliber machine guns opened up with an ear splitting chattering.

The guns of the Tennessee, Maryland, California and other ships let go. At the same time I could see the flame belching from the five-inch dual purpose guns on the cruiser Helena, break into a chattering ear-splitting roar. I have never been so close to so many guns firing at once. The noise was deafening and the smell of cordite was strong. The big gun flashes were blinding.

I was standing on the after well deck, just forward of the radio room, watching the aircraft coming directly at us. The sky was filled with black puffs from the terrific ack ack barrage from all ships present.

I could see a torpedo plane flying through the smoke, very low and just skimming the surface of the water making a torpedo run on the mine layer Oglala secured alongside the cruiser Helena. The torpedo was launched and the plane pulled up sharply to clear the ship's mast. The torpedo entered the port side of Oglala and passed through the ship and penetrated the cruiser Helena, where it exploded killing many men in her lower compartments. The Helena continued the action as the Oglala slowly sank crushing against the side of Helena, making it impossible to fire her port batteries. Within a few minutes, navy yard tug came alongside Oglala and dragged her down the dock a few hundred feet where she was directly opposite the Argonne. She slowly keeled over, crashing and breaking up against the concrete dock as she rapidly sank to the bottom of the harbor. She made a terrific grinding noise breaking off the topside superstructure and masts as she went down. She was only about fifty feet away from Argonne. Part of her top side wreckage was strewn over the dock. The crew members abandoned ship jumping into the water and onto the dock. We pulled the survivors aboard the Argonne for first aid.

The Japanese fighters and dive bombers continued to fly low over the docks and ships blasting away with their 7.7 mm machine guns. I can still see the machine gun slugs tearing into the dock kicking up dust as the planes flew by.

The pungent order of burning cordite was stronger, and the noise of gun fire and torpedo explosions rose to a crescendo of death and destruction.



USS SHAW, DD, BLOWS UP IN DRY DOCK. AT THE RIGHT CAN BE SEEN USS NEVADA MOVING DOWN THE CHANNEL, HEADING FOR SEA. SHE WAS HIT BY SIX DIVE BOMBERS AS SHE PASSED USS ARGONNE 1010 DOCK. NEVADA WAS MOVED TO THE SIDE OF THE CHANNEL ON THE FAR SIDE, WHERE SHE SANK TO HER MAIN DECK LEVEL.

LATER I INSTALLED EMERGENCY "VHF" PORTABLE RADIO EQUIPMENT FOR USE IN THE RESCUE WORK. I ALSO INSTALLED THE SAME TYPE OF EQUIPMENT ABOARD THE BATTLESHIPS USS CALIFORNIA AND USS WEST VIRGINIA. CALIFORNIA WAS STILL SINKING AS I BOARDED HER OFF FORD ISLAND "BATTLESHIP ROW." IT WAS A VERY TRAGIC EXPERIENCE FOR ME TO TALK TO THE NEVADA'S CAPTAIN, AND OFFERING MY SERVICES, WHICH WERE GREATLY APPRECIATED. I THEN CONTACTED ADMIRAL CALHOUN VIA "VHF" RADIO AND GAVE HIM THE NECESSARY INFORMATION.

Explosion after explosion rent the air. The sky was as dark as midnight, with a dense cloud of black smoke enveloping the great battleships. All ships were now in action, with the sunken ships firing their anti-aircraft batteries and heavy caliber machine guns which were still above the water level.

Everywhere I looked was flame and destruction! One Japanese dive bomber dropped a bomb down the smoke stack of the battleship Arizona, blowing up her magazine with a tremendous explosion which rocked the harbor. A huge ball of fire and smoke mushroomed 500 feet into the air. The concussion was terrific!! One thousand two hundred and eleven sailors were killed on the Arizona.

The sky was full of flying steel, mens clothing, bits of wood and other wreckage. Parts of Japanese planes were floating down like autumn leaves. Three-inch brass shell cases were rolling over the ship's deck. Machine gun shells and gun wadding were also littering the decks.

It was difficult to see through the dense smoke. Men were running around the ship carrying out their orders, yet in all the action, every man seemed to know what to do. They had been so well trained that it was not necessary for the officers to pass out many orders.

I saw one of our officers, a full commander, suffering from shell shock. He was so stunned that he could not move. He just sat there staring, completely dazed. He was taken below decks to his cabin. It was a pitiful sight to see a man in that condition.

As I stood on the deck repairing our radio antennas that had been shot down by machine gun fire and flying steel, dive bomber after dive bomber passed low overhead on their way to the Arizona, which was now a blazing wreck. They continued to drop their bombs on the Arizona.

There was no let up!!! I thought, my God, will this ever stop! The West Virginia had also been hit by dive bombers and torpedo planes. There was a large hole in the side of West Virginia with her steel plates twisted and torn. The hull had been ripped wide open as though a giant had torn apart a tin can! The ship was a blazing hulk with hundreds of men still below decks.

The Tennessee was hit by dive bombers scattering splinters in all directions. One piece of flying steel tore into the bridge of West Virginia tied alongside Tennessee, killing the ship's captain, Captain Bennion, USN.

Maryland, inboard of the capsized Oklahoma, went into action with all her anti-aircraft batteries blasting away at the low flying Japanese planes.

Both the Maryland and Tennessee were protected from Torpedo bombing attack by the sunken battleships which were tied up alongside their outboard side. Some men fired Springfield rifles at the low flying planes as they passed over the ship.

It looked as if we could not shoot down the Japanese planes! They were flying above the range of our three-inch anti-aircraft guns, and our machine guns were not very effective against the fast flying planes. One zero plane flew low overhead just clearing our mast and was shot down by our machine guns fire. It seemed to blow up in a symbolic cloud of writhing smoke. All I can remember is watching the wings from the plane fall into the water as were actually cut off by our heavy .50 caliber guns. We received credit for shooting down this plane, however it is difficult to give credit to one ship with so many ships firing in such a confined area.

The destroyers Cassin and Downes were in the large drydock with the battleship Pennsylvania at the other end of 1010 dock, the worst possible place for any ship during action! Both destroyers were blazing hulks after one dive bomber attack. Pennsylvania was also hit by dive bomber attacks. Many casualties occurred on all three ships.

The fleet camera party whose duty was to take movies of gunnery practice at sea, was stationed aboard Argonne. They brought out their movie cameras and calmly went about their business of taking motion pictures of the action from the decks of the Argonne. These pictures were later shown on TV under the title of "Victory at Sea".

Tennessee, inboard of West Virginia, which had been sunk, was hemmed in between the Ford Island concrete mooring piers and the West Virginia, now a blazing wreck, caused flames to spread to Tennessee, who was fighting the spreading fires. Tennessee continued the action with all anti-aircraft batteries and the machine guns that were mounted in her fighting tops.

Repair ship Vestal was outboard alongside Arizona. A dive bomber made a pass at vestal and scored a direct hit which penetrated below decks, killing an old shipmate of mine.

Nevada astern of Arizona was the only battleship to get underway. She slowly proceeded down the main channel on her way to sea. We had received several radio messages from Japanese ships that were using our frequencies and call letters. These messages advised us that Japanese troops were landing near Pearl Harbor from transports now offshore. Other messages stated that 125 Japanese ships were ready to attack Pearl Harbor. These messages were shown to me by my radiomen.

Nevada slowly passed the long column of burning battleships which had been set afire by blazing fuel oil from the sunken ships. The flames were spread from ship to ship by the wind blowing from the northeast.

As Nevada passed our port beam, I looked directly overhead and observed six Japanese bombers flying in "V" formation at an altitude higher than the range of our three-inch anti-aircraft guns. As I watched them flying overhead, I thought this was the end for me. They were dive bombers, and within a few minutes they spotted the Nevada through the dense smoke and started their long, long sweeping dive in single file. As they passed over Nevada they scored six direct hits, and within a few minutes the Nevada was a mass of flames. She paused in the center of the main ship channel and finally moved over to the far side of the channel where she sank to the level of her main deck with many casualties below decks. The dive bombers then swung around and blasted away at all ships within range with their machine guns. Men who were blown off ships, climbed back aboard to man their guns and continue the action. We were all fighting mad.

Maryland was also in a similar situation being jammed in between the capsized Oklahoma and the concrete mooring piers of Ford Island Naval Air Station. She was also fighting fires caused by flaming fuel oil spreading over the harbor. She continued the action with her anti-aircraft batteries.

Over on the Navy Air Field at Ford Island, the Japanese fighters and dive bombers were making strafing runs on the parked planes and the officers quarters. At first, I thought they were attempting to land on the airstrip, because they were flying so low, about three feet above the ground.

They sent their tracer bullets through the barracks and had a field day setting fire to all the navy planes that were parked on the field. They also set fire to the hangers destroying our patrol bombers and torpedo planes. Only one of our planes was able to take off from the wrecked flying field.

Arizona was a blazing wreck and the Japanese were still pouring bombs into her burning hulk. As I looked through the dense black smoke from the burning ships, I could see the colors flying from the main mast of the Arizona. **It was an inspiring sight to see that our colors were still there as explosion after explosion blasted the ship.** It was then, that I really appreciated the words of The Star Spangled Banner.

Rescue parties were sent out in motor launches from Argonne to pick up survivors from the burning ships. They were swimming through flaming oil that was rapidly spreading over the harbor. I supervised the launching of life rafts that were used in the rescue operations.

Many survivors were picked up and carried aboard Argonne. They were covered with heavy black fuel oil from head to foot as they staggered up the gangways. Our own crew members were also coated with the heavy fuel oil during their rescue operations.

The seriously wounded were carried into the warrant officers mess room and stretched out on the mess table which served as an operating table. The only medical men aboard were the ship's dentist and the hospital corpsmen who did all they could for the wounded and dying men.

The serious wounded were replaced in our cabins where some died due to the severity of their wounds. One officer who was in Honolulu with his family during the attack, was horrified when he returned to the ship after the attack and found a dead man stretched out in his bunk. The deck of my cabin was strewn with bloody and oil-stained clothing stripped from the severely wounded, who were placed in my bunk and also on the deck.

All inflammable material was thrown overboard to reduce the danger of fire. All paint, paint thinner and alcohol was tossed over the side.

The attack lasted for one hour and forty five minutes, the longest hour and forty five minutes of my life!!

After the battle was over, we threw all sheets and blankets aboard ship on to 1010 dock to cover the dead who were being brought in from the sunken ships in motor launches. Other rescue parties were picking up dead and wounded men from the harbor waters. Over three thousand men had been killed during the attack.

1010 dock was the center of all rescue operations. Ambulances and emergency vehicles from the Pearl Harbor area were concentrated on 1010 dock.

Several destroyers, including the two who were berthed alongside Argonne, prepared for sea. Volunteers were requested from Argonne to replace casualties suffered by the destroyers. Many men volunteered for destroyer duty, but only a few who were the envy of their shipmates were accepted.

It was an awe-inspiring sight to watch the destroyers get underway and slowly proceed down the harbor to sea. All hands lined the decks and waved and cheered as the destroyers passed by on their way to engage the Japanese fleet.

An officer who had been rescued from the old battleship Utah told me how he had been mistaken for dead. He had been severely gassed by the fumes from burning fuel oil below decks and had passed out. As he slowly regained consciousness, he heard a voice say, "Tag this one, he is dead." He forced himself awake and in no uncertain terms assured the doctor and hospital corpsman that he was very much alive!!!



USS HELENA, LIGHT CRUISER
6" GUNS. TORPEDOED

The light cruiser
USS. HELENA (left) belches
smoke. The capsized mine-
layer OGALA is in the fore-
ground. USS PENNSYLVANIA
is behind left hand smoke.

USS OGLALA, MINE LAYER,
TORPEDOED AND SUNK
OPPOSITE USS ARGONNE.

USS ARGONNE (AGC-31)
FLAG SHIP COMBASEFOR.
IN BOARD 1010 DOCK

PICTURE #4 - USS HELENA, PENNSYLVANIA, and OGLALA.

1010 Dock Immediately after the attack. USS ARGONNE is moored to the left side of dock, not shown. Note sailor bottom left approaching Argonne gangway. Cruiser HELENA guns are now silent, USS OGLALA Mine Sweeper crashed against dock as she sank.

After the last Japanese plane had flown back to their carriers, I was assigned the job of establishing emergency radio communications between the sunken ships and the Argonne, headquarters for all salvage operations.

I boarded Pennsylvania and went below decks to the main radio room where I met the radio officer. He advised me that they were able to maintain communications without my assistance.

While I was below decks inspecting the battle damage, general quarters was sounded on the alarm system with that loud "Honk Honk Honk Honk" from the bull horns that navy men never forget. Its sound of urgency galvanizes everyone to action. Everytime I hear anything that resembles the "Honk Honk" of general quarters, I find myself on my feet ready to dash to my battle station.

The word was passed that the Japanese had launched another attack and were on their way to Pearl Harbor. The black mess boys were lined up alongside the ammunition trays passing shells to the air-craft batteries. All hands were tense standing by waiting for the attack. All we could do was to wait and wonder what would happen next.

It was a new experience for me to be deep down inside a great battleship waiting for the attack. It is an experience I will not forget. We were all standing there waiting very quietly, when suddenly a negro mess boy started to sing in a low voice, a negro spiritual. Soon it was taken up by all the mess boys and the tension was broken.

After standing at general quarters for about twenty minutes, the all clear signal was passed and I was able to return to Argonne.

The next ship I boarded was the Nevada which had sunk on the edge of the main ship channel after a dive bombing attack. As I climbed over the broken railing of the quarter deck, I saw the ship's captain, a four stripper sitting on a canvass cot near the superstructure. I walked up to him and saluted. He returned my salute and said, "Son, what can I do for you. Come and sit beside me." I advised the captain that Admiral Calhoun had sent me over to set up emergency radio communications between Nevada and Argonne to expedite salvage operations. He thanked me and told me to use any equipment I could salvage from his ship. The captain was greatly depressed and showed the strain he had been under. All about us were signs of death and destruction. Many dead were still below decks.

That evening the Arizona and West Virginia were still burning fiercely sending up great columns of smoke and flame. We received word that the carrier Enterprise was sending in six planes to land on Ford Island Navy Airstrip adjacent to battleship row.

I was standing on the after well deck forward of the main radio transmitter compartment. All ships in the harbor were standing by their guns, having been at general quarters since early morning. Everybody was trigger happy and waiting for another Japanese attack.

The dive bombers from the Enterprise had turned on their landing lights and were flying low coming in for a landing. Suddenly, all hell broke loose! All ships opened fire with a shattering roar with their .50 caliber machine guns criss-crossing the harbor with their tracer bullets. We thought they were Japanese dive bombers coming in for another attack.

I stood on the deck, stunned by the sudden outburst of gun fire. The machine guns of the destroyers alongside us were chattering with a tremendous racket. The sky was filled with thousands of tracers, as the planes flew over the harbor. Tracers were coming at me from all directions. I have never seen such a display of fireworks! Ships were firing at each other in an effort to shoot down the planes.

I realized that I would have to move quickly to avoid being killed by the heavy machine gun fire. I made a quick dive for the nearest water-tight door and slammed it shut behind me, as the machine gun slugs slammed into the bulkheads.

The six planes were shot down and only two of the pilots survived. Our gunners were now veterans, having learned a costly lesson from the morning attack.

Two marines were killed during the firing. They were on the main deck and had been killed by machine gun fire from other ships. A .50 caliber machine slug from the California had penetrated the hull of Argonne and killed a sailor, who had been rescued from Oklahoma.

Fortunately for us, the carrier Enterprise had been at sea during the battle. Her usual navy yard berth was directly opposite Argonne and about fifty feet away on the other side of 1010 dock. If she had been in her berth during the attack, she would have been a prime target. The Japanese would have concentrated a tremendous dive bomber and torpedo attack on her, which would probably have sunk Argonne.

We were protected to a certain degree by a large navy yard crane close by our stern, however we were wide open to torpedo attack from the northeast.

Later that night, I was ordered to board California and set up emergency radio communications with the Argonne. I set out across the harbor for California aboard a motor launch. All ships had darkened ship. The boat crew were armed with rifles and I carried my .45 caliber automatic pistol. Our orders were to proceed very slowly across the harbor being careful to avoid floating wreckage. If any small craft were spotted, we were to stop our engine and shout, "Boat Ahoy!" If they failed to reply to our hail, we were to open fire. We had to be alert for possible Japanese one man submarines and other small craft on the lookout for enemy activity. We were able to cross the harbor without incident except for bumping into small pieces of floating wreckage.

Picture #5 - USS California (Not shown - Quality too poor to reproduce)

USS CALIFORNIA, AS I BOARDED HER AFTER THE BATTLE, TO INSTALL VHF EMERGENCY RADIO EQUIPMENT FOR COMMUNICATION WITH THE FLAGSHIP OF COMMANDER SERVICE FORCE PACIFIC FLEET. SHE IS LISTING PORT AND IN DANGER OF CAPSIZING, HOWEVER THEY WERE ABLE TO KEEP HER FROM LISTING TOO BADLY. HEAVY CABLES AND HAWSERS WERE UNDER GREAT STRAIN AND CAUSING CONSIDERABLE NOISE AS THE VESSEL SLOWLY SANK. BULKHEADS WERE BULGING DUE TO THE IN-RUSHING SEA WATER FLOODING ALL COMPARTMENTS. THE RADIO CREW HAD ABANDONED SHIP AND WERE LOCATED IN A DUG OUT ON FORD ISLAND. I WAS ABLE TO CONTACT THE RADIO OFFICER IN THE DARKNESS AND SET UP A WATCH FOR THE VHF EQUIPMENT, I INSTALLED UP FORWARD. I THEN RETURNED TO ARGONNE FOR FURTHER ORDERS FROM ADMIRAL CALHOUN, USN.

The California's quarter deck was under water as we proceeded cautiously around her stern through the wreckage, being careful to avoid the capsized Oklahoma nearby. We tied up alongside the main deck on the starboard side.

California was still sinking very slowly, and there was danger of her capsizing. The crew had secured heavy wire cables and lines between the concrete mooring piers and the ship in an effort to keep her on an even keel as she continued to sink.

The heavy ropes and cables were creaking and groaning under the tremendous pressure caused by the sinking ship as I climbed aboard. The starboard compartments were being flooded with sea water to compensate for the flooded compartments on the port side that had been opened up by the torpedo explosions.

I found it extremely difficult boarding a strange ship in the darkness and feeling my way through the twisted wreckage to the bridge deck. All the anti-aircraft guns on the ship's superstructure and fighting tops were manned, and the gun crews were standing by for another attack. They had been at general quarters continuously since the morning attack. Everyone showed signs of battle fatigue and the strain they had been under. Everybody was quiet and spoke in low voices, when I questioned them concerning the whereabouts of the ship's radio officer.

I finally found the radio officer and his radiomen in a small fox hole they had dug on the shore line of Ford Island adjacent to the California for their communication equipment.

The radio officer was very depressed as he told me how twenty of his radiomen had been killed by a torpedo explosion as they attempted to abandon ship.



Cruiser USS Boise on arrival at New York 1942, after a 10,000 mile voyage from Noumea, New Caledonia in the South Pacific via the Panama Canal. Emergency repairs were completed by ship fitters aboard USS Argonne (ACG-31); Admiral W.F. "Bull" Halsey, USN, flag ship South Pacific Force, Commissioned Warrant Officer, R.L. Simpson, USNR, Ship's radio officer, USS Argonne. Boise was down by the head and in a sinking condition, as she came along side with over 200 dead, after a major sea battle in the Solomon Islands. This was a night action. All her guns were radar controlled. An old shipmate, Lieut. M.F. Peterson, USN, was the radar officer. Six Japanese cruisers were sunk in the thirty minute battle. This was written up by Ripley in "Believe It Or Not". The Japanese sank some of their own ships in the heavy cross fire. Boise was holed many times by the Japanese gun fire. Captain "Iron Mike" Moran, USN, was the ship's skipper. I met him after the battle. He was a real "Gung-ho" skipper! Lt. Peterson had picked up two columns of Japanese cruisers on radar scope. Capt. "Iron Mike" gave the order full speed ahead. Boise got under way at flank speed between the Japanese cruisers firing port and starboard, as she dashed through the battle line. After looking over Boise's battle damage, it was a miracle that this gallant ship survived!

R.L. Simpson

I was advised to install my emergency radio equipment on the bridge deck which was done with the assistance of my boat crew. Communication was established with the Argonne and we returned to our ship after midnight.

There was very little sleep aboard Argonne that night, all gun crews were standing by their guns throughout the night expecting another attack.

A young ensign, who had only been aboard two months, came up to me during the night and said, "Mr. Simpson, do you mind if I sleep near you tonight?" He was quite depressed by the events of the day and I could see that his morale was very low. I invited him to join me, and we both stretched out on the boat deck where we could see the roaring flames from the burning Arizona and West Virginia light up the sky.

During the night, midget Japanese submarines were proceeding to Pearl Harbor to attack the remaining ships. The next morning, December 8th, word was received that Japanese submarines had entered Pearl Harbor.

All ships were on the lookout for torpedo wakes, depth charges were dropped from PBY flying boats in an attempt to destroy the submarines.

We all stood by waiting for the torpedo attack. It was a difficult thing to do when you are surrounded by so much death and destruction. One small midget Japanese submarine was finally sunk and was later hauled up on the beach near the submarine base.

About noon on the 8th, a navy destroyer returned to Pearl Harbor towing a Japanese fishing boat with four crew men. The fishing boat was brought alongside 1010 dock and the Japanese crew members were dragged out of the boat by our marines, who were fighting mad at seeing Japanese prisoners for the first time.

I went out on the dock with the marines and watched them take the prisoners into custody. The prisoners were checked over very thoroughly for weapons.

They were then handcuffed, blindfolded and finally pushed into a station wagon. Each prisoner had a marine with a cocked .45 caliber automatic pistol pressed into his back. The marines had itchy trigger fingers and were ready to fire at the least sign of resistance.

The prisoners were trembling violently and showed very plainly that they were expecting death at any moment. The station wagon with its load of prisoners and marines was then driven off 1010 dock, and that was the last I ever saw of the prisoners.

That night, I experienced a terrible let down. The battle was over, and I continued to re-live my experiences. I was extremely depressed. I felt as if I needed a stiff shot of whiskey to relax me.

A complete censorship was clamped down. It was impossible for me to communicate with my wife Winnie and the children, Nancy and Patricia and advise them that I was safe. I realized that she had received word of the Pearl Harbor attack, but did not know whether I was dead or alive.

Several days later, Winnie finally received word from Mrs. Otis Hill of the Honolulu Star Bulletin, an old friend of ours. She was able to pass a radio gram through the censor stating that the Argonne had not been sunk and that I was presumed to be alright.

A few days after the attack, the Arizona had cooled from the raging fires, and I was able to board her. When I boarded the Arizona, over a thousand dead were still below decks and the stench of death was terrible. I could see bodies jammed in the wreckage and I will not attempt to describe the sight I saw below the main deck. I could only stand it for a few minutes. I left with my boat crew for Argonne through the oil-covered waters.



The Australians Have a Word For It – If You Speak 'Strine'

By Chris Lockwood
NEW YORK – "Gloria Sarah Titch" and "Emma Chizit" are no ladies. They are neither tennis stars nor swimmers, but they do live "down under" as part of Australia's own tongue affectionately known as "Strine."

The Aussies have a way of turning phrases like "glorious heritage" and "How much is it?" into something the untuned ear might easily mistake for the names of two girls.

As Churchill once said about the U.S. and Britain, Australia and the U.S. are two nations divided by a common language.

Australians talk in a blunt, pithy slang that owes more to the sheep farmer and swagman than to the dilettante. And that's the drum (truth).

The roots of the dialect lie in self-defining terms like "no-hopper," English rhyming slang "apples and pears – stairs," and aboriginal words like "coroboree" or dance, a party get-together.

Following are a few of the more common slang expressions travelers to Australia will undoubtedly encounter:

- cobber – friend
- boozie – pub, or one who frequents it too often.
- bluey – redhead
- bonzer – good
- buckshee – free
- boss cocky – top man
- ding – a swinging party

- fair go – reasonableness or good sportsmanship
- belt up – shut up
- boomer – male kangaroo (unlikely to be encountered in Sydney)
- cheese and kisses – the wife
- good-on-yer – term of approval
- drongo – simpleton or fool
- fair dinkum – absolutely true
- furphy – rumor
- kack – bad luck
- mate – best friend
- good guts – inside information
- good drop – excellent drink
- drink with the flies – drink alone
- hard yacker – hard work
- hit your kick – dig into your wallet
- nuttet out – thought out
- lashings – plenty (as of food and drink)
- doover – a "whatchamacallit" or anything
- left like a shag on a rock – left on your own

So give it a burl (try), don't rubbish (brush off) the sheilas (girls), enjoy the noggin (drink) and keep away from the no-hoppers (a nothing).

Above all watch out for the Black Stump, which, according to the Qantas dictionary of Aussie slang, is "a mythical landmark signaling the end of civilization."

DEFINITIONS

"IQ" OF AN OLD SALT

THE CAPTAIN

is said to be a man who knows a great deal about very little ... and he goes along, knowing more and more about less and less until finally he knows practically everything about nothing.

AN ENGINEER

on the other hand is a man who knows very little about a great deal and keeps on knowing less and less about more and more until he finally knows practically nothing about every thing.

"SPARKS"

starts out knowing practically everything about everything and ends up knowing nothing about nothing ... due to his association with Captains and engineers...

Submitted by ... Jock MacLaren 1111-P

(Says "Jocko" ... " On pain of being hung-drawn- and - quartered, the author of the above 'Nut-i-cal' verse, whoever it was, signed the gem ... "ANONYMOUS"



Chapter Directory

The "Get-to-gether" Society

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60085.
- XV CANADA-GREAT LAKES (NORTH SHORE) (Ontario, Quebec)
Kenneth J. Taylor (D) VE3CHN 86 Marlborough St., Guelph, Ont.
N1E 1X8. "Iz" Kandel S/T Pro-tem.
- XVI GONZALES - VANCOUVER ISLAND
Leonard A. Polack VE7ZH (D) 3111 Newport Ave. Apt. 10, Vic-
toria B.C. V9C 1P2. David A. Smith (S/T).

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Cornelis "Cor" Glerum PAØGL Nieuwe Kerkplein 29, Schore 4423
AC Netherlands. Phone: 01102 NR 3185.

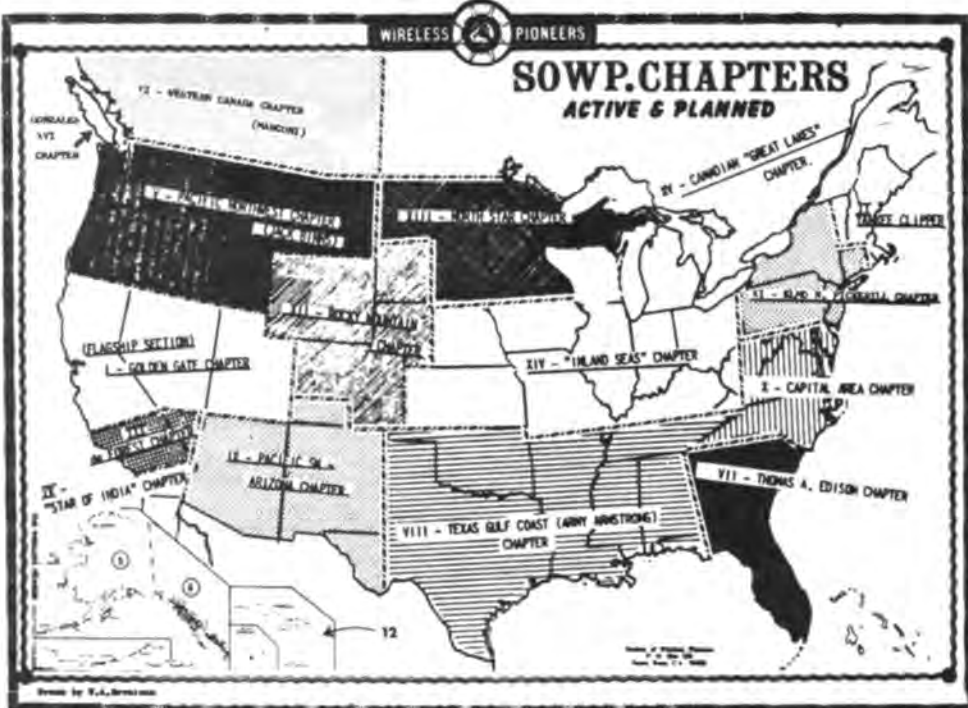
EDELWEISS CHAPTER - SWITZERLAND

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SOUTHERN CROSS - AUSTRALIA/NEW ZEALAND & ISLANDS SO. PACIFIC

Frank A. Carey (D-S/T) VK2AMI also CHOP. 142 Seville St.
Fairfield NSW 2165 Australia T:7261038
Wm J. "Bill" O'Brien (AR) 45 Murray St. Pymont NSW 2009

Members (and new members especially) are invited to contact the Chapter Director of his area for information about Chapter Activiti and coming meetings, net schedules of the local area. You will find a warm welcome for all Chapter Officials and SOWP Members.



S.O.W.P. NET SCHEDULES

NO	NET(CW)	AREA	DAY	TZ	LOCAL	GHT	FCY	CHOP	ANCS
1.	Pickerill	ME MA CT NY NJ PA OH	MON TUE THU	E	0900 1900	1400 2400	3670 3670	W3FYD W22I	Jack Ed
2.	FLORIDA	FL GA SC ALA TN	SUN	E	1400	1900	7053/7063	K4TF B111 K4HDV DAN	
3.	PAC COAST	CA AZ NV OR WA BC DO	THU FRI	P	2000 1530	0400	3555 7084	W6BNS BOB W6SXF Frank VE7CHE TED W4TBZ MAC W6NHA ERNIE	
4.	TRANSCON	US CAN HOLLAND	THU	C	1000	1600	14125	W5QKU OSCAR W6IC GEORGE W5QKU OSCAR W4NP VIC	
5.	YANKEE EASTERN	ME MA VTMA	SAT	E	1000	1500	7040	K2IC EARL	
6.	CAPITAL AREA	DC DE VA NC	SAT	E	0900	1400	7045	W4NH EM W3NVD JOHN	
7.	JACK BINNS	PAC NW BC	TUE	P	2000	0400	3555	W7TU TOM W7LQ RAY	
8.	AVOCADO	S CALIF DO	DAILY	P	0830 1500	1630 2300	7084 7084	W6KHA ERNIE W6NHA ERNIE	
9.	TRANSPAC	UC HI VK AUSTRALIA NCS VK2AMI FRANK	THU	P**	2100	0500	14010	K6UJ BRANDY	
10.	TRANSATLANTIC	US CAN HOLL	SUN	GMT		1100	3550	P4BGL COR	
11.	INLAND SEAS	GT LAKES	MON MON	C	1900 1930	0100 0130	7065 3565	W6RUD STEVE W9RC MAC	
12.	UPPER LAKES		DAILY	C	1800	0200	3555	W9GI GEORGE	
A.	HAPPY HOUR	SO CALIF	MON-FRI	P	1630	2330	3947	W6QQB FRED	
B.	PICKERILL	ME MA CT NY NJ PA OH DO	SUN THU	E	1415 0900	1915 1400	3917 3917	W2SF HILT W2ZI Ed W2OV HARRY	
C.	CAPITAL AREA	DC DEL VA NC	TUE	E	1000	1500	3967	W3OUG JAKE W4NH EM	
E.	MESCAN	FM	WEEK DAYS	P	0845 0915	1645 1715	3740 147.3	VE7WZ BILL VE7WZ BILL	
F.	GONZALES	BBOTOM	SUN	P	1600	2400	3740	VE7ZP LEN VE7GV ARNIE	
SPL	QSTC	USA(CW)	FRI	E	1100	1600	14115	K4NP VIC K2NP B111 W6LZ RAY	

● Shut down at present. May reschedule or resume later

FINAL REPORT

The SKIPPER'S LOG

JUNE 6 & 7 1979

ANNUAL SOWP CW QSO PARTY

For comparison, 1978 SOWP QSO Party figures are shown in parenthesis:

Stations participating in QSO Party 136 (207)
* submitting logs 46 (72)

Participating by Districts:

District	Logs Received	Stations Participating
1	1 (3)	6 (13)
2	9 (8)	26 (23)
3	7 (7)	13 (19)
4	8 (16)	23 (33)
5	1 (2)	9 (5)
6	7 (13)	15 (51)
7	6 (9)	16 (32)
8	0 (4)	4 (5)
9	1 (3)	4 (5)
Ø	4 (3)	11 (8)
KR	0 (0)	1 (0)
VE	2 (5)	6 (14)
YV	0 (0)	1 (0)
YB	0 (0)	1 (0)

WIN, PLACE & SHOW:

George H. Osborn, 3087-P, K6OS came in First with 80 contacts

F. J. Mehrling, 2500-P, W4NH placed with 75 contacts

Daniel F. Courtney, 1156-P, K4HDV showed with 54 contacts.

It is obvious that the above members are expert DX Hounds who were out for blood. Let this be a warning for the future.

George L. Meek, 1290-P, W6IC showed up again with the neatest log. He must have sat up all night making it out. He should be strong competition for old man Moses in carving the Commandments on the rocks.

Observations hither and yon:

Conditions were poor all over. The Floridians complained the least. They must be living right. W4NH quit after the first night because conditions were lousy. Went fishing. Fishing was lousy too. You should have seen the one that got away!

The longest DX contact was between George Meek, W6IC and Seth, 2L90-V, Y3BQADT, Jakarta, Indonesia. In the interest of the Equal Rights Amendment, we must share the glory between them and settle for a rendezvous at about Wake Island.

Quite a number of members listed only 10 contacts on the logs which they submitted. So did some of their contacts with the result that the QSOs didnt match. Moral: Log the same zugs that are going to log you.

One member opined that it was sad that with over 3,000 members, there was such a poor showing.

Many members entered the contest but did not submit logs. Evidence that their walls are already papered.

My sincere thanks to all those members who submitted logs with a recap broken down by districts. It made it so much easier to cross check.

See y'all next year, the Lord willing and if the critik dont rise.

4th ANNUAL

73
Pete
Pete Fernandez, W4SM

STORY OF THE GREAT LAKES



Mariners Weather
CUTTERS Log



RESCUED BY ICEBREAKER

Sixty-one Coastguardsmen survived crushing Lake Michigan ice jams on January 14, 1979, when the 180-ft ACACIA and the 110-ft ARUNDEL were freed after being trapped together off the coast of Washington Island by ice that threatened to topple the ARUNDEL.

The 20 crewmembers of the ARUNDEL abandoned ship and marched 300 yd across the frozen lake to the comparative safety of the ACACIA, which although stranded was in no immediate danger of sinking. The two crews huddled together for 13 hr until the ACACIA freed herself, and with the help of the 230-ft Coast Guard icebreaker MACKINAW salvaged the ARUNDEL.

This sea drama ended after the ARUNDEL was re-boarded by her crew on January 14 and brought back to life. The two cutters had begun their twin mission on the 12th. They were escorting the 1,000-ft ore carrier EDWIN GOTT from Sturgeon Bay through the 18-in-thick ice of Green Bay. The GOTT was on her maiden voyage bound for Milwaukee.

Cutting through the ice at only about 1 mi/h, the cutters, with assistance from another cutter, the RARITAN, successfully led the GOTT through the Rock Island Passage from Green Bay to the open Lake. As the RARITAN departed, the other two cutters received a request from two freighters about 10 mi away, the AMOCO ILLINOIS and the JUPITER, to break ice for them. The two cutters reached the freighters and within several hours managed to break a path. Then another freighter, the WILFRED SYKES, requested assistance in reaching Escanaba.

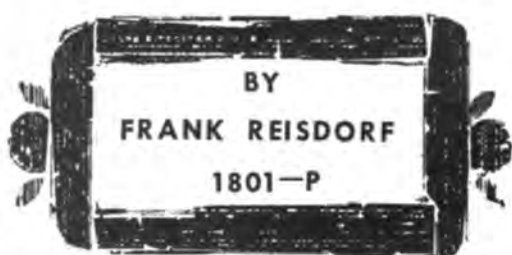
The two cutters were breaking ice within 600 yd of the SYKES when the ARUNDEL became wedged in a windrow—a ridge of ice—and ice began to overrun the stern deck. When the ARUNDEL began to list, the decision was made to abandon the vessel. With the ACACIA spotlights on the floundering ARUNDEL, the ARUNDEL crewmembers, linked by ropes, were led by three ACACIA sailors across the ice.

At the time of evacuation, winds were estimated at 45 mi/h, and snow and frigid temperatures combined to make operations difficult. Over the next several hours, the strong winds began forcing the two ice-embedded ships toward Fishermen Shoal near Washington Island. The ships had drifted to within 4,000 yd of the shoal and were moving toward it about 5 mi/h. About 4 a.m. on the 14th, the ACACIA was able to free its rudder and moved alongside the ARUNDEL. A line was attached, and the ACACIA attempted to tow the ARUNDEL clear. Shortly before the MACKINAW arrived, the ACACIA freed the ARUNDEL from the ice on a second attempt.

The U.S. Coast Guard cutter ARUNDEL is wedged in ice off Rock Island in Lake Michigan. Her 20-man crew, linked together with ropes, walked 300 yds across the ice to the cutter ACACIA, which kept the ARUNDEL illuminated. The ACACIA was also stuck but managed to free herself and the ARUNDEL.

Reprinted by permission - NOAA

NOVEMBER STORM



It's safe to say there have been relatively few Great Lakes radiomen who ever had to pound out an SOS, much less do so on their first assignment, but it did happen aboard the lake steamer Conneaut in the late fall of 1940. Clearing Milwaukee during a major storm, she took her crew on a wild ride up the lake, dragging over shoals and eventually going ashore on Michigan's upper peninsula.

The fact that Conneaut (Konnyaut) survived without breaking up was due in large part to her design. Known as a 'self-unloader', her holds were hopper-shaped, emptying onto a fore and aft conveyor in a reinforced tunnel. A vertical line of buckets brought the cargo on deck, dumping it on an endless turbine-driven belt, part of a mobile boom able to swing out ninety degrees. Six thousand tons of coal or nine thousand tons of limestone could be unloaded in four to six hours.

Built at Great Lakes Engineering Works in 1916, she originally carried a Canadian Marconi spark set, with original call WCU. In 1925, a twin 204-A rig was substituted, but the hairpin filaments occasionally broke from high frequency vibrations set up while running the conveyors, so they were replaced with 852's with their coiled filaments, and they stood up well. A 500 cycle alternator fed the plates directly on 500 and 425, or through a mercury rectified supply as was required on her two low frequencies of 143 calling and 155 working. Later a 2,000 volt MG set was installed. Original Receiver was a Federal, then a

Grebe CR-5. The antenna consisted of a two-wire flat-top with pipe spreaders, dropped during loading cargo by a winch at the base of the stack.

Operator Harry Walsh began the season of 1940 as usual - he'd sailed on WADV since 1932, but piled off after the first trip, having been offered a shore job too good to refuse. Eugene Richards with a brand-new ticket took over and had an uneventful time, 'til the early morning of November eleventh. Richard's account of the events that followed, as submitted to J.B. Moore, then manager of stations WNO and WCV, and chief operator at WCV, follows.

The Conneaut left Milwaukee at 3:38 AM, November 11th after unloading a cargo of coal at the Fellenz Coal Co. dock. The steamer, light, headed up the lake for Calcite, Michigan. The weather was bad, with a southwest wind of about 40 MPH blowing over the stern. At eight AM the first morning schedule was held with coastal stations WNO and WCV of the Michigan Wireless Teleg. Co. Although the ship was rolling badly at this time the schedules were held without extreme difficulty save for the trouble of keeping the operating chair on the floor and the typewriter on the table.

These hourly schedules having been held as usual without trouble, I signed off with the two coastal stations at 4:30 PM, the usual final transmission, leaving the receiver on 500 KC. I retired because of seasickness, since the wind had been increasing all day. The morning weather report had been taken to the pilothouse, but no further weather was asked for and no late evening weather was copied.

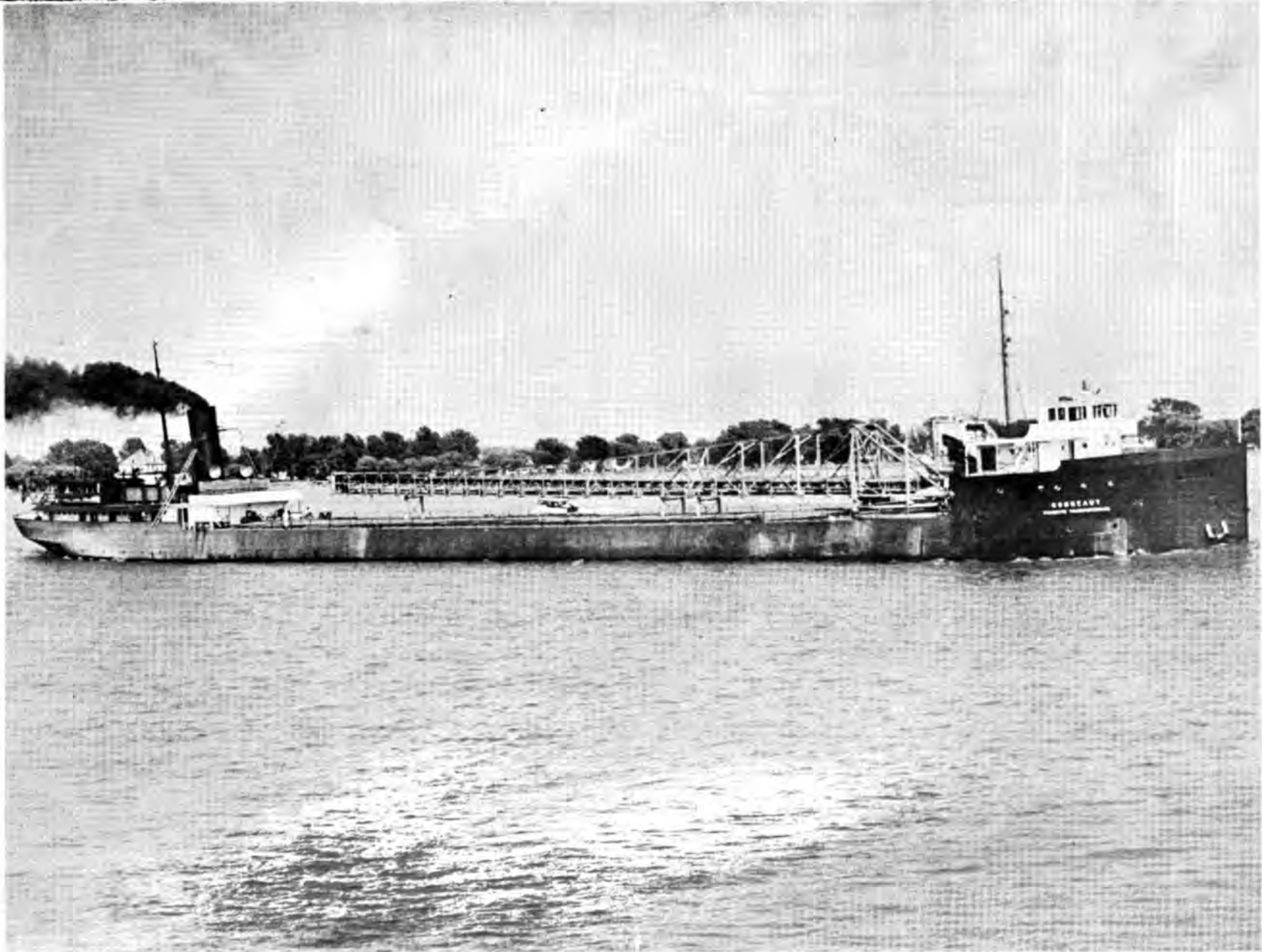
The ship was rolling very badly this night with a high sea. The captain estimated the wind velocity at 120 MPH. In a blinding snowstorm, many high waves burst over the ice-coated deck as the ship pitched and rolled.

At about 1:AM, the anchors were dropped but failed to hold, and shortly thereafter, the ship struck a reef, breaking the rudder and wheel. The third mate rushed into the room to notify me to stand by and get a lifebelt on. I went to the radio room where everything had been tied down, and found that much of the equipment had come loose, spreading over the floor. Legs were knocked off the operating table, breaking the MG starting switch and jamming the generator cooling fan. An Edison battery had broken loose and the operator's chair had smashed to pieces along with the typewriter. The ship's receiver had pulled loose from the table where it had been screwed down, and was in pieces on the floor.

Having purchased my own receiver for personal convenience, it had held in it's blockings, and was still operating, but from the sound of the weak signals coming through the speaker, I knew the antenna must have blown down. I set about fixing the equipment, and by bending the generator fan blades back, removing foreign articles from the motor and using a rope to hold the MG starting switch in position, I had put the transmitter back in operating condition except for the ship's antenna.

First I tried to stretch the wire down the deck, but could only reach four hatches before I had to return. A combination of wind, ice and waves washing over the deck made me hang on with both hands to keep from rolling over the side. Returning for help, two men volunteered, a wheelsman and a watchman. Together we crawled along the deck to take shelter from the high waves and to dodge the wavetops which were freezing like ice-cubes and playing particular havoc.

We reached the aft end of the ship with the wire, and while the wheelsman crawled up the ladder on the stack and lowered a rope, we attached the rope to our emergency antenna and hoisted it up, then made our way forward. When I tested the transmitter, I found it working, but of f-frequency.



"Laker" S.S. CONNEAUT—WADV—1946—Frank Reisdorf R/O.

Since this operation had taken several hours, we had drifted many miles without the aid of rudder or propeller, and had been striking rock-bottom as we dragged both anchors. I notified the captain of the condition the transmitter was in and he asked me to see if I could contact the coastguard.

I used the call 'NCU' along with 'XXX' the emergency signal, since we had a man who been hurt, but wasn't able to contact anyone. Therefore, I notified the captain that the transmitter was off frequency and a distress 'SOS' might be more effective. I was told to send an SOS, so at 9AM Nov. 12th, and SOS was sent on about 550 KC, taking care to send during the distress periods and all other times. At 9:42 AM I heard my message being repeated by the steamer Presque Isle, KFNS, to the Canadian Marconi Station at Sault Sainte Marie, Ontario, VBB, who in turn relayed it to WLC, Rogers City, Michigan, who notified the coastguard and WCV, Wyandotte, who informed the shipowners.

Shortly after my first confirmation of distress, the first mate came in from the pilothouse and asked me to get in touch with the coastguard to take the men off. This message was immediately handled by various stations now listening to my frequency, and relayed to the C.G. by WNO, Alpena, because all wires were down in the section involved, making land telegraph and telephone communication impossible. At Alpena, the coastguard cutter "Ewing" was notified and set out to rescue us between Biddle Point and Epoufette, about 1,000 feet offshore.

After having heard my distress traffic handled, set about to repair the longwave section of the transmitter. After making several adjustments, the longwave was again in service and I was able to make direct contact with WCV Wyandotte, where messages to and from the shipowners could be carried on. A list of evident damage and conditions at that time was sent.

A wheelsman had been hurt quite seriously, and medical aide was asked for, but it was still blowing very hard and was impossible to get him ashore since the coastguard boat had to take shelter and we were unable to launch a lifeboat in the high sea. A Medico service message was sent, and instructions were received from Detroit Marine Hospital and aid administered. The next day the sea having gone down considerably, a doctor was brought out who stated the man had the best of attention through this information.

The owners of the Conneaut, the Wyandotte Transportation Company, notified the wrecking tug "Favorite", also equipped with radiotelegraph, to rescue the ship from where it had finally settled. Nov. 13th, in the afternoon, the tug arrived and after working all night, released the boat about noon the next day, and started to tow us past the

convoy of two coastguard boats, the Tahoma of Cleveland, and the Ewing of Alpena.

Arriving at Port Huron, Michigan at 8:AM, Nov. 16th, we stopped for fuel and supplies. At this point the tug Arkansas met us and trailed behind, guiding the boat through the river. We had to stop for a heavy snowstorm and high winds which delayed us for four hours. Departing again, we arrived at Great Lakes Shipyard, River Rouge, Michigan, ending the distress communications from steamer Conneaut, WADV.

.....

Captain Yates of the Conneaut, in testimony given before a board of enquiry, claimed that non-operation of Lansing Shoal radiobeacon, taken out by the storm, contributed materially to the grounding. Hull damage was set at one-quarter-million dollars

An interesting spinoff of the affair was the authoring of a prize-winning novel, "November Storm". The writer used the above episode as a climax to fictional events, woven around the adventures of a young lake sailor, including a case of premeditated murder made to look like a shipboard accident, various hi-jinks with a woman passenger, and much emotional dialogue between the captain and first mate.

The book caused a commotion at the time, as the author was the son of a captain who sailed for the same company that operated the Conneaut. Readers inevitably tried to make fact out of fiction, but one could hardly blame them, since the vessel was described in the yarn as a self-unloader, clearing from Milwaukee before ending up ashore. Radio work involved received scant attention from the novelist, but his description of the stormy ride from a crewman's standpoint was high drama.

Conneaut lost her telegraph gear in 1948, it being replaced with a Lorain County Radiotelephone. Sold to new owners in 1965, she was laid up at Green Bay, Wisconsin, in 1968 and ultimately bought by foreign interest. Loaded with scrap, she left the lakes under tow with another former Wyandotte ship, the steamer Huron, /WBCC. It is reported that one of these vessels rolled over and sank enroute to their destination, a scrapyard in Italy.

Ackn. for Richard's report and much data to "Burt" Moore, now retired as manager of marine transportation, Wyandotte Chemicals Corp'n.

Photo courtesy Claude Lockwood.

Dear S.O.W.P.

Surely enjoyed the Quarterly Journal - sure thank Ed Raser for the museum picture-- That took us back in time.

Got to thinking though - The Dinosaur are extinct - we have his bones, but we do not know what sounds he made - Did he moo, bark, roar, mew or cackle??? - let us not let our beloved spark go that route.

I bet that even the Smithsonian would love to have a cassette tape of sparks jumping their gaps - plenty of brass pounders left on the SOWP skeds to make a beautiful tape. I am sure all the SOWP folks would want to buy a tape also.

Such a tape could be a home saver also - when the OM got cranky and grouchy the OL could just slip the SG tape on and everything would automatically heal. There are more ways than one of skinning a cat they say.

Thanks again,

John A. Blackman
Route 8, Box 246
Dothan, AL 36301

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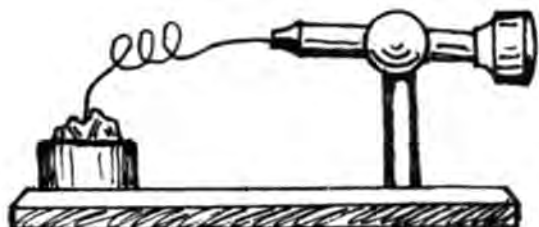
... 'Since the days of Marconi'



The 'Singing Spark'

OF AUSTRALIA

Unique History of Frank Cary's Wireless Set



RECEIVED BY 'BRANDY' WENTWORTH K6UJ

This little yarn might just as well be entitled "WATCH THOSE WHISKERS PUSSYCAT!" for it brings us back to the days when spark was king and a "cat's whisker" with a galena crystal was indeed the real queen of receivers. It (the year, not the whisker) comes from Down Under. It was submitted by our Society member, Mr. Frank J. Carey, 913-SGP, VK2AMI, Director of the Southern Cross Chapter and CHOP of the Transpacific Net.

Before launching the yarn, we'd like to tell you something about this man, Frank Carey. It seems he was born in the Australian town of Toowoomba which, according to the chart, is located 75 miles as the gull flies, due west of Brisbane, in Queensland. He spent his early childhood on a big cattle ranch in the Outback. In the process of growing up, Frank had a rather rugged go of it. At twelve he was selling newspapers on the street corners of Brisbane. At fifteen he had found a job in the sugar can fields of tropical North Queensland cutting cane, but not raising it (unintentionally that is) until later on.

Realizing he would get nowhere in this world of ours without an education, Frank began studying at night - under difficulties. He tells us and we quote: "I studied by the dim light of a smoky Pearl Oil lamp in railway construction camps. Then, in the late evening after a hard day's work as a gandy dancer, digging trenches and laying sleepers, I'd wind up often as not with a muddy boot thrown at my head by a drunken 'navy' who objected to the oil lamp in the bunkhouse disturbing his beauty sleep".

Frank endured these rigors of a laborer's life on the railways and in the sugar cane fields until one day the mysteries of wireless telegraphy suddenly captured his imagination. From that moment on he applied himself even more diligently to his studies. It wasn't easy for him either. But being a young man endowed with grim determination and ambition, he persevered, especially in the realm of E=iR. This magic formula finally led him to a momentous decision, namely to build his own wireless set to prove to himself that Marconi and inventors of equal genius really had something there. This, mind you, was in the year 1917!

So Frank, with the help of several professional brass pounders he'd met, put together the wireless set you see pictured herein. We'll let him describe it: "The box on the 'breadboard' in the rear right hand corner contains a Thordarson 3 inch spark coil. It had a 'note' frequency of around 200 to 250 cycles. The coil windings (pies) to protect them from moisture, were incased in a solid block of Paraffin wax. The hole in the forward end of the box provided screw driver access for make and break adjustment of the vibrator contacts. At the rear center of the breadboard is the primary of the transmitter's oscillation transformer, made of copper tubing. Originally, the circuit was designed to operate on 200 meters, the worldwide ham wavelength of the early twenties as most of you know. In front of the OT tuning coil can be seen the adjustable 'straight' spark gap mounted on two standoff insulators. On the right of the board you will recognize the telegraph key, a 'navy' type quite common here in the early days.

On the left side of the board is the receiver. It consists of a loose coupler designed to cover a range of 200 to 5000 meters. The primary is tuned by a sliding contact, the knob of which is visible on top the coil. To the right of this contact is the antenna changeover switch. The terminals on the small bakelite panel to the left are for a loading coil to permit coverage of wavelengths above 600 meters. The coil itself was 'swiped' by some villain when I loaned the set to a radio club for a lecture. On the same panel are the mounting clips for a "Roome Oscillaudion" valve, also stolen from the set at the same club meeting. These valves were the 'bright emitter' types also known here as De Forest Oscillaudions. They were the first three element vacuum tubes seen in Toowoomba and were brought here from the U.S. by an American millionaire named McGowan who visited Australia aboard his big 'wireless' equipped yacht Speejacks at the end of World War One.

As you will note, the secondary of the loose coupler slides in and out of the primary on guide runners and is tuned by the tap switch on the end of the coil. Just to the left is the 'cat's whisker' detector. It consists of a fine platinum wire on the tip of which is of course adjustable to select a sensitive spot on a small piece of carborundum which fits in the little metal holder. There is a second detector not readily visible in the photo. It is a carbon block with a shallow hole drilled in it to contain a drop or two of diluted nitric acid. This 'electrolytic' combination acts as a detector when the tip of the 'cat's whisker' just touches the nitric acid (ouch!).

The receiver was quite sensitive even for its time, that is before that rascal stole the valve. The circuit is a reflex type. The incoming rf signal was first amplified by the Roome valve and then rectified by either the carborundum or electrolytic detector. The resulting audio signal was fed back to the grid of the valve, thus providing the reflex action. This circuit when properly adjusted produced excellent results. Even the early day radio broadcast stations within a 50 mile radius could be pulled in with good volume and clarity, not to mention ships at sea and our Australian shore stations which included VLA, VIS and VIM.

The pair of phones to the left of the breadboard are the famous old mica diaphragm Baldwins, or 'Baldies' as they were affectionately known by early day wireless men.

The two small valves on the polished 'log' pad in the foreground of the photo are Marconi type 'V24's'. The engraved white plaque between the two valves states that they were both used in the first wireless telephony experiments between Toowoomba and Melbourne. The other plaque on the main board which probably won't reproduce legibly on newsprint, reads as follows:

AMATEUR "WIRELESS" 1910-1922
MARCONI 'SINGING SPARK' SYSTEM

This pioneer amateur station from Toowoomba, Qld. was built in 1917 by Mr. Frank Carey A.M.I.R.E.E. (Aust.) who presented it to this museum July 1968.

Restoration work by the Electronics Section
Sydney Water Board.

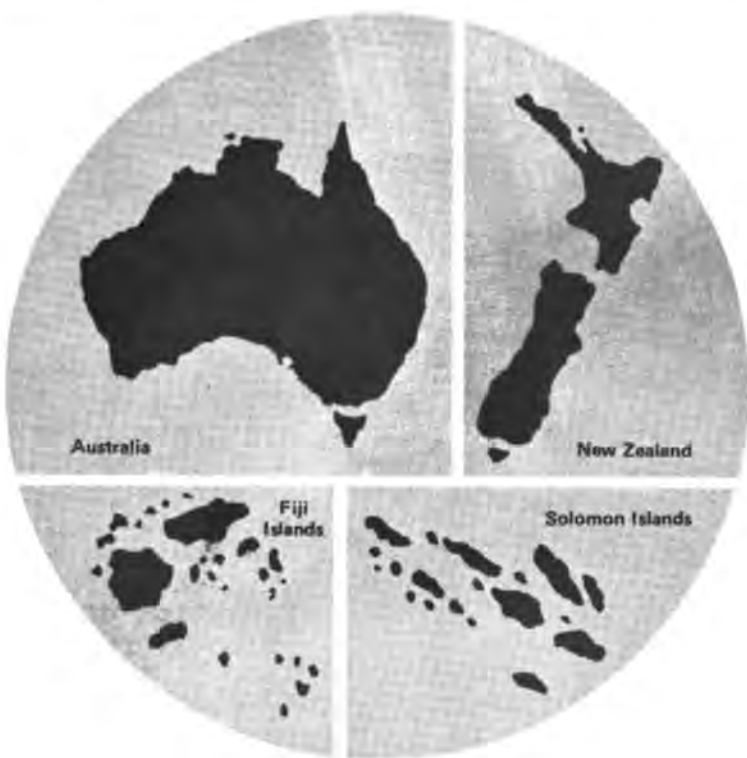
The entire layout as shown in the photo is the way it looks today, on exhibition for all to view in the Communications Gallery of the Brisbane Museum. Actually, the title AMATEUR wireless as implied by the nameplate on Frank's pride and joy is a gross misnomer. Historically speaking, his little spark set's service record is no more amateur than that of NAA or NSS. Here is why: No sooner had Frank finished building his set than it was confiscated by the Navy Department because of prevailing World War One security restrictions. But, instead of stowing it away with all the other gear taken from ham operators during the war, the Australian Military Forces assigned the set to a Signals Corps unit near Brisbane for use in training new wireless telegraphers. In our opinion, it was quite a compliment to Frank, his ingenuity and craftsmanship, to have his set chosen for this service from what must have been dozens of other amateur sets. Incidentally, the "s" on the end of 'Signals' is Aussie spelling.

When Frank's set was eventually returned to him after the war, he barely had a chance to inspect and fondly caress it before it was confiscated again, or rather commandeered by the Post Office Department. They put it in service as the Brisbane base or control station for a communications network sponsored by the Government for contacting and handling message traffic with veteran Army and Navy personnel settlements in the outlying areas. These settlements were established to rehabilitate and provide new homes for the soldiers, sailors and airmen returned from World War One. As Frank tells it, "The settlements were, for the most part, located in thickly timbered virgin forest land, in a wild country where access was mostly by 'bush trails' only. Communication with the outside world was vital, especially where medical and other human necessities were concerned". According to Frank, the spark sets installed at each settlement were largely patterned after his - the same as shown in the accompanying photograph. The only components missing from the photo are the secondary or antenna coil of the oscillation transformer, the stolen Roome valve, the plate glass/copper foil transmitting condenser and, of course, the batteries which powered his little rock crusher. He goes on to say that the set was

Director - Southern Cross Chapter



Frank J. Cary



coupled to a large Navy type sausage (cage) antenna when installed at the net headquarter station in downtown Brisbane. Also, it was at this time that Frank modified the receiver for reflex operation by adding the Roome valve (as described above), thus improving the efficiency of the rig enormously.

Although deprived of his masterpiece at virtually the moment he'd created it, any pride of accomplishment Frank may have is most certainly highly deserved in knowing that his "singing spark" had rendered such yeoman service to humanity by enabling those brave men who'd fought the battles of the First World War - and survived - to keep in touch with their families, loved ones and with each other. His wireless set remained in this government service until telephone lines replaced it in early 1922. But, by the time the Post Office decommissioned the Brisbane station and after what seemed endless delays finally released his set, Frank had already passed the Wireless Operator Examination in London and gone to sea for a long tour of duty with the Merchant Navy. The set was retrieved by his family in a badly damaged condition with many parts missing. They took it home with them to Toowoomba, carefully wrapped it in a heavy woolen blanket and packed it in an old steel cabin trunk. They stowed the trunk in the hayloft of their barn to await Frank's return from somewhere on the high seas. There it remained for almost 16 years, until 1939, when World War II broke out. As Frank was still away at sea, his family, fearing that the Post Office Department would again commandeer the old set, carried it to Sydney and asked the manager of the Red Funnel Steamship Company, for whom Frank had worked as an operator, to "Please take care of the trunk for him". They dared not tell what was in the trunk, nor did they ever advise Frank what they'd done with his most treasured possession. The company manager had his men stow the trunk in a sail loft above the wharf where it remained, forgotten by all hands, until about 1960 when the wharf was torn down and the old cabin trunk "discovered".

Naturally, after some twenty intervening years, no one present knew what the trunk contained, especially since it was without identification markings of any kind. When its steel lid was finally pried open to reveal the bulging surface of a moldy old moth-eaten blanket, some timid bystander thought it might contain a mummified body and called the gendarmes. The cops responded promptly, as they usually do, in squad cars with lights flashing, tires screeching and sirens wailing. As if it were a routine procedure, they quickly unrolled what was left of the old blanket. But neither the cops nor anyone else on the scene knew what that "thing" was they'd uncovered. So, they called the University for advice. Two young scientists immediately rushed over to examine the "thing", but they could not identify it either, except to assure all present it was not a bomb - no indeed, definitely not.

Luckily, when Frank made up the "breadboard" he had enough foresight (or maybe a premonition that his set might go astray) to carefully carve his full name on the underneath side. As it so happened, the young scientists spread word of their mysterious findings around the campus until it happened to reach the ears of a former history student who had returned to the University for her Ph.D. It seems she'd known Frank when she was a young girl in Toowoomba (no doubt one of his old flames) and had recognized his name. She decided then and there to make it a first priority project to track Frank down. If you'll take a close look at the handsome lad in the accompanying photo, it's easy enough to see why.

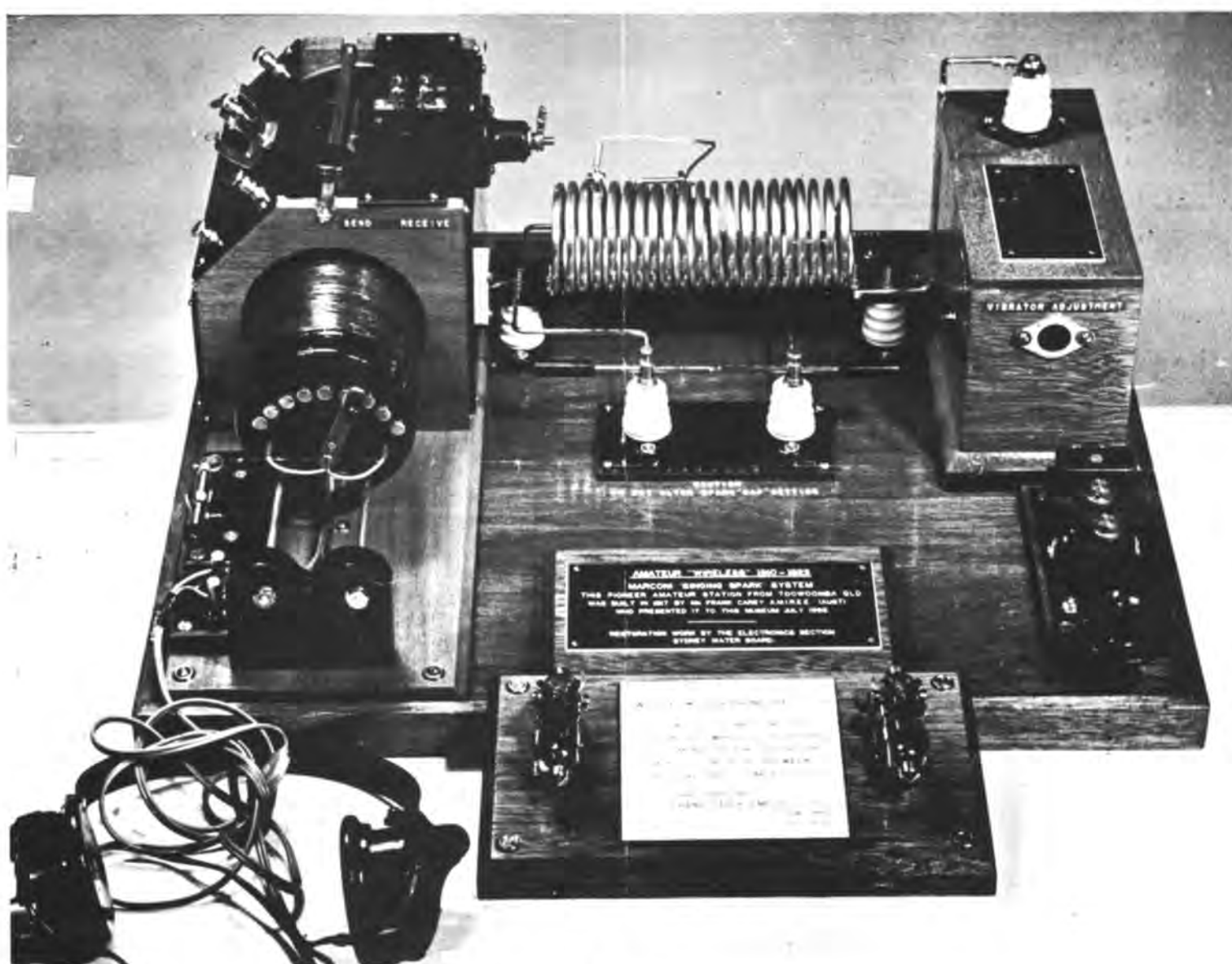
The lady's investigation led her to an old buddy of Frank's who told her that the object of her search was away at sea; a wireless operator on some merchant marine vessel, or so he thought. With a clue like that she could not miss. She took off under forced draft for the Sydney waterfront and combed it from stem to stern until she ran across the Port Captain of the Red Funnel Steamship Company at their new dock complex. The Captain happened to know Frank well and assured the good lady he would see to it that the "thing" would receive ever loving care pending Frank's return from sea duty.

Sure enough, several months later Frank's ship sailed into Sydney harbor and he retrieved his old wireless set. He found it so badly tarnished, corroded and falling apart that he decided to try to have it completely restored, just as a conversation piece if nothing else. The restoration work was accomplished by the Electronics Section of the Sydney Water Board where Frank had friends who were also old time wireless telegraphers.

The refurbishing job turned out so well that Frank made a second decision; namely to put the set on the air just for fun. He talked it over with some other friends of his in the Signals Corps. They too were interested and arranged for a test between two Army radio stations about 50 miles apart. Hardly anyone, especially the new "lids", expected to hear even a peep out of the ancient rig. However, when an operator first pressed the key, that "singing" spark signal virtually knocked the cans off the head of the poor bloke on watch at the receiving station. But that wasn't all. The Norfolk Island Navy Station, almost 1,000 nautical miles away called Sydney to inquire, "What the hell is going on? All those 'diddle-dee-dah-dits' are jamming our ship traffic. Order that station to please QRT". We suspect the word 'please' might have been a garble?

Of course, as Frank points out, the receivers at both stations were highly sophisticated super-hets and not of the long gone cat's whisker/galena vintage. He also may recall, with some of the rest of us, how vessels in the China Sea would file their TRs direct with KPH on 600 meter spark. We are sure Frank "FG" Geisel, Prexy Emeritus of our Society and Mr. KPH himself, will verify this professional DX of the mid-twenties?

Famous Set on Exhibit at Brisbane Museum



BY BRANDY WENTWORTH K6UJ

Before signing off this yarn, there is one more "appearance" of Frank Carey's wireless set we'd like to tell you about. It went something like this: Some eager news feature impresario connected with a major Australian TV network got wind of the Army Signals Corps "test" with its rather startling results. He looked up Frank and invited him to demonstrate his set to their nationwide TV audience as a special feature program. So, it was arranged for Frank to sit beside the set as though he were operating it while an announcer described the action. However, the impresario, apparently a fugitive from Hollywood, wanted to glamorize the performance by injecting what Frank appropriately calls a "glamour girl" into the act. In addition to a bikini, she was to wear a pair of ear phones and "chin wag" into a hand mike. Furthermore, to sacrifice realism for the spectacular, the impresario insisted that Frank screw down the key so that the spark could not only be seen but heard singing merrily away across the gap throughout the entire sequence. Before going further, we should hastily add that this was to be a live show with no rehearsals or pre-recorded tape.

According to Frank, the glamour gal started off okay, but then, why he'll never know, she leaned over and touched the spark gap! The terrific jolt from the hot spark knocked her and the announcer head over heels backwards flat onto the deck, while Frank made a frantic dive to switch off that beastly coil. But he didn't quite make it before the picture faded away into the sunset and the song of the singing spark did likewise.

What happened? This did: Somehow the spark fed back through the studio mike amplifiers and then into the main control booth system, which in turn tripped all the circuit breakers and put the station off the air. Frank said he got lost smartly (we'll bet he did!) and picked up his rig later after all was forgiven and peace and quiet reigned once more.

As a fitting finalé to his yarn, Frank deserves the last words which are these and we quote: "Some TV fans I knew told me the next day it was the best damned show that blasted station had ever put on the air!"



ROYAL NAVAL AMATEUR RADIO SOCIETY
Headquarters: G3BZU-HMS MERCURY
East Meon-Petersfield-Hampshire-GU32 1HE

Dear Bill:

I wondered if the enclosed would be of interest to you and "SPARKS?"

I first used it in the Autumn '76 edition of our Newsletter. I regret that I have not received an answer to the final question.....

Please feel free to use it as you wish.

Very many thanks for our copy of "SPARKS." I only wish I could produce such a splendid Journal!

Warmest regards from RNARS.

Yours aye--
Tom Biddlecombe
(G3WAO)

T. F. Biddlecombe,
Lieutenant RN; Chairman and Editor RNARS.
6 Buller Avenue
Houndstone, Yeovil, Somerset BA22 8SN

-oOo-

NOT THE FIRST.... AND CERTAINLY NOT THE LAST

A moving story about a lad who must surely be among the Founders of the modern Communications Branch in the Royal Navy

The Wireless Log of HMS. FLOANDI

-oOo-

Compiled from information and photographs contributed by Con McPartland, G4EVP, RNARS-978.

-oOo-

From the Wolverhampton 'Express & Star' July 20th, 1917.

".... Mr. Leo Harris of Eagle House, Penn Fields, Wolverhampton, has received from the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, further information respecting the death in action of his son, Douglas Morris Harris on board the drifter Floandi. The Commissioners have received from the Rear Admiral commanding the British Adriatic Squadron a despatch forwarding the damaged Wireless Log of the Floandi with the accompanying statement: "The Log was found in this condition in the Wireless Operating Cabin of H.M. Drifter Floandi after an attack on the drifter line by three Austrian Cruisers in the Adriatic on May 15th 1917. The Wireless Operator Douglas M. Harris, A.B., R.N.V.R., continued to send and receive messages although the drifter was being riddled with shells, until he was

killed by a piece of shrapnel whilst writing in the Log; the piece of shell perforated the Log, and the line made by his pencil when he was hit and collapsed can be seen on the page upon which he was writing.



He was found dead in his chair, lying over the Log.

The Rear Admiral suggests that the circumstances are such that the damaged Log should be preserved as an Exhibit in the National War Museum, the scheme for the formation of which has recently received His

Majesty's approval. Their Lordships, it is added, propose to carry out this suggestion so that your son's name, and the example of courage and devotion to duty which showed in his death, will remain on record for all time."

The official letter states further that in the meantime the Wireless Log of the Floandi will be carefully preserved at the Admiralty.

Information has been received that Douglas M. Morris was buried at Taranto on May 17th. Harris, who was nineteen, joined the R.N.V.R. on his eighteenth birthday. Their Lordships state they feel sure it will be a satisfaction to Mr. Harris to know that not only his son but the whole crew behaved with such bravery.....

- 'Express & Star' July 20th 1917.

-oOo-

Con McPartland spotted the Monument pictured above in a local cemetery, took the photo, and then started "digging" in the local Library. He found the above items plus some family detail, but then the trail ran cold. Is the Log in the Museum? Perhaps you could ask next time you visit, and let Con and us know.



Oct. 26 1942

SS. Pres. Coolidge Sunk by Mine

Picture taken by Fred Roebuck "FD" at 'Big Dock' in Manila on Maiden Voyage of the new liner. Radio Officers on the first trip were Paul Means, Fred Roebuck and John Bender (the last two now Silent Keys). The last watch on the Coolidge was stood by Member George L. Meek, 1290-P. Following is George Meek's report on the "last" trip on the Coolidge whose Master was Commodore Henry Nelson. The date was Oct. 26 1942.

I was on watch at the time entering Harbor Laganville (Now Santo) SE Coast of Espiritu Island, New Herbrides with 8,000 (Eight thousand) troops on board. Radio silence, but we were in constant touch with U.S. Navy on Island via blinker. No mention was made of harbor being mined. At exactly 9:30 AM, local time the ship struck the first mine. About one minute, perhaps less, the ship struck the second mine. Ship was then taking water fast. Captain Nelson then ran the ship onto a coral reef to delay sinking. Only two men, a member of the blackgang and an army captain were lost, due to Captain Nelson's decision to beach the ship. The calmness and discipline of all the men and a fantastic rescue by the U.S. Navy. The ship sank in 39 fathoms at 10:55AM, one hour and 25 minutes after hitting the first mine.

The Book Shelf



BOOKS OF INTEREST

"AURORA BOREALIS -- THE AMAZING NORTHERN LIGHTS"

Author: Dr. S. I. Akasofu of the Geophysical Institute, University of Alaska, for the first time to my knowledge, gives a complete scientific explanation of the Aurora as determined only during the last few years. I feel quite sure that many members would find the history, the discoveries and the explanations and diagrams fascinating. Especially so if they have ever worked in high latitudes. The book (softbound) is published by the Alaska Geographic Society, BOX 4-EEE, Anchorage, Alaska 99509 and sells for \$7.95.

Review by Robert J. Gleason, 642-P

SEAWAY - THE UNTOLD STORY OF NORTH AMERICA'S FOURTH SEACOAST

BY JACQUES LESSTRANG
SALISBURY PRESS 19.95

THE ST. LAWRENCE SEAWAY, AN IMMENSE ENGINEERING FEAT OF OUR TIME, IS AN AMERICAN LEGEND THAT NEVER ACHIEVED POPULAR STATUS SUCH AS THE LESSER ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE SUEZ AND PANAMA CANALS. AUTHOR LESSTRANG DESCRIBES THE HERCULEAN EFFORTS WHICH OPENED A NEW FOURTH COAST FOR THE UNITED STATES WITH HALF A HUNDRED INTERNATIONAL DEEP-DRAFT PORTS FROM THE GREAT LAKES TO THE SEA. THE STORY, BEGINNING WITH ORIGINAL CONCEPTIONS TO ENABLING LEGISLATION IN 1954, TO DEDICATION IN 1959 BY PRESIDENT EISENHOWER AND QUEEN ELIZABETH, IS TOLD IN DETAIL. NOT OMITTED ARE THE DARK POCKETS OF SPECIAL INTEREST AND PRIVILEGE WHICH FOR DECADES PREVENTED THE BUILDING OF THE SEAWAY, AND EVEN TODAY OPPOSE THE WATERWAY AT EVERY OPPORTUNITY. THE AUTHOR, A RECOGNIZED AUTHORITY ON THE SEAWAY SYSTEM, GIVES US A CLEAR VIEW IN PHOTOS AND TEXT OF HOW IT WORKS—HOW A SHIP CLIMBS THE HEIGHT OF A SIXTY STORY BUILDING TO GET FROM THE ATLANTIC OCEAN TO THE GREAT LAKES. GEOGRAPHY, CONSTRUCTION WORK, LOCKS, PORT OPERATIONS, SHIPS, WINTER NAVIGATION, TOLLS, POLITICS AND THE FUTURE ARE COVERED, AND THERE ARE TWO HUNDRED EXCELLENT PHOTOGRAPHS, SOME IN COLOR.

ELMER BURGMAN

THE GREAT WHITE FLEET

1976 - John H. Melville - Published by Vantage Press, Inc. 516 W. 34th St. New York NY 10001. \$7.95

This scrupulously researched and adroitly organized volume records the history of the ships that made up United Fruit Company's Great White Fleet. It is also a chronicle of the growth of the banana industry in the tropical regions of the Western Hemisphere, an important footnote to social history, and a compendium of short sketches dealing with adventure on the high seas.

During most of the peacetime years of this century, the Great White Fleet was engaged in the banana trade, making runs between various Central American ports of call and the continental United States, and in ferrying affluent tourists in high style. During both world wars and, to an extent, during the Vietnam conflict, most of the craft in the Fleet were given over to government service, carrying men and material into combat zones. In times of war and peace, the Fleet was confronted with the eternal vagaries of nautical lifestorms, celestial phenomena, collisions, hair's-breadth rescues, and the like.

Author John H. Melville documents all the significant wartime and peacetime activities of the Fleet, while providing statistics and specifications on the craft involved. Various contributors to this account include Fleet captains and other personnel, who relate their sailing experiences with graphic immediacy. Mr. Melville's eye for telling detail and his meditations on the decline of ocean-going transport would no doubt win him the praise of another chronicler of the sea who shares his surname.

From inner jacket of book (furnished by F.E.Huntley)

"FIRST ACROSS"

The U. S. Navy's Transatlantic Flight of 1919 is the story of the first attempts to fly across the Atlantic and the success of the NC-4. In all my years in aviation I did not know that without its radio and its extremely able radio operator the NC-4's flight would have ended in failure like the NC-1 and the NC-3 which started with NC-4 from Newfoundland for the Azores. Further, I did not know that her radio operator Herbert C. Rodd, was a "shoreside operator of Marconi in Detroit" who joined the Navy in WW-1. His DF work, with primitive equipment and without any ignition shielding on the engines was marvelous. The author, Richard K. Smith, received the 1972 History Manuscript Award from the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics for this book. Ensign Rodd's complete radio log of the entire flight from New York to Plymouth is included. This book was published in 1973. Possibly it has been reviewed before, but I found it only on a visit to the Naval Academy here. It was published by the Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, Maryland 21401. Price \$10.00

Review by Robert J. Gleason, 642-P

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4.	Member's Imprinting		5.75	6.50	8.25	12.50
5.(a)	TOTAL COST USA Members		9.80	13.45	21.25	35.20
(b)	Do. Canada, Mexico & 10.95		13.95	22.55	36.30	
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#4 A. L. Kam - KDLL
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1944 -
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A Look at Norway's ROGALAND Radio



The Receiving Station at Skjaeveland.

BRIEF HISTORIC REVIEW

On 11 February 1927, the first contact via short wave (HF) was established between Norway and ships in foreign trade. The HF service was developed at Bergen Radio, and at the outbreak of the War in Norway in 1940, about 450 ships in the Norwegian Merchant Marine were equipped with HF radiotelegraph stations. The traffic amounted to approximately 95,000 telegrams per year.

During the years after the war, there has been a rapid growth in the installation of HF stations and, in spite of the fact that in the last few years the foreign-going merchant fleet has shown a drop in number of ships, there are at present more than 1,200 Norwegian ships equipped with HF installations. Of these, close to 900 have both HF telegraphy and telephony capabilities, while well over 300 have only HF telephony facilities for long-distance communication.

By the end of the fifties, the traffic had increased to such an extent that expansion at the coast station was necessary. A new station was built in the southwestern part of the country, in the county of Rogaland, and in 1960 the HF service was transferred from Bergen Radio to Rogaland Radio.

The receiving station is located in the municipality of Sandnes, 20 kilometers south of the city of Stavanger. The HF transmitting station is located at Naerbø, about 20 kilometers south of the receiving station. The separation is necessary to avoid interference to the receivers from the station's own transmitters. The station also has at its disposal a number of transmitters located at Jeløya near Moss, south of Oslo.



Section for MF and VHF Telephony.

The station is attended both day and night by a total staff of 160 employees. About 120 are involved in the handling of traffic while the remainder are occupied with technical and administrative matters. Normally, there are about 40 operators on duty in the daytime weekdays, and 12 at night. On Sundays and holidays the number of operators is reduced to about 30.

COASTAL RADIO SECTION - MF and VHF

In the MF band, the station operates one telegraphy and four telephony traffic channels. One of the telephony channels is remote controlled via land-lines to Haugesund. In addition, two MF channels have been reserved for traffic to and from drilling platforms and barges in the North Sea. For VHF telephony, there are presently eight traffic channels available at four locations. Each installation has complete equipment for distress and calling channels, i.e. 300 kHz, 2182 kHz and VHF channel 16.

In addition to the traffic handling, which amounts to about 16,000 MF/VHF telephone calls and 32,000 radio telegrams (3,000 AMVER) a month, the section also attends to important safety functions for part of the coast and nearby ocean areas. The station is therefore equipped with a direction finder which covers both the MF and the HF bands. The direction finder is used in emergency situations and when for other reasons ships may want to have their position determined. Continuous aural watch is maintained in a separate room on all distress and calling channels.



Service Section for HF Telegraphy.

HF RADIOTELEGRAPHY

The section for HF telegraphy comprises 25 ordinary operators' positions and four so-called QRY positions, especially arranged for watch-keeping on all calling channels concerned. The section has at its disposal 19 transmitters, of which 16 can be used simultaneously.

When traffic transmission is not in progress, an announcement is automatically transmitted by means of the "CQ slip" as to which transmitters are on the air and on which calling channels watch is kept.

It is apparent that the previous yearly increases in the radio telegram traffic have come to a standstill, attributable among other things to fewer ships and reduced crews, and the change-over to other maritime services such as radiotelephony and radiotelex.

RADIOTELEX

This is a fairly new type of maritime service. In 1965, the first equipment of this kind was installed in a Norwegian ship, and test transmissions were started. The results were so good that the Telecommunications Administration decided to continue test operations with two additional ships. In 1971, radiotelex was established as a regular maritime mobile service.

Radiotelex is now being expanded to nine complete terminals. The section is connected to the automatic international telex network and is presently handling about 4,000 telex calls per month, involving countries in all parts of the world.

HF RADIOTELEPHONY

The HF radiotelephony service has undergone a rapid expansion since it was transferred to Rogaland Radio in 1961. To be able to cope with the ever-increasing traffic in the best way possible, repeated expansions of the section have been necessary. New terminal equipment has been put into use and the capacity has been increased so that today 18 calls can be handled at the same time. At each operator's position, two calls can be handled simultaneously, while the operator makes preparations for establishing a third call.

In addition, the section has two operators' positions exclusively for call and reply (QRY service). Today, 18 traffic transmitters and 2 QRY transmitters are available of which 5 and 1, respectively, are located at Jeløya.

All sections of Rogaland Radio transmit free medical advice (MEDICO) and messages to the AMVER Center in New York. As the collection and forwarding point for AMVER traffic from all Norwegian radio stations, Rogaland is an important link in the worldwide chain of AMVER radio stations. We at AMVER salute them.



Reprinted from "AMVER" Bulletin - U.S.C.G.

The Mary Celeste Mystery

But the men's clothing, boots and oilskins, even their pipes, had been left behind. All the captain's effects were on the ship. On his bed, "there was an impression that might have been made by a child sleeping there." Toys were also found in the cabin.

On the log slate still lying on the cabin table, the following entry dated Monday, November 25, 1872 had been written... "At 5 o'clock made the island of S. (Saint) Mary's bearing ESE. At 8 Eastern point bore SSW 6 miles distant."

These were the farewell words of the Mary Celeste. From November 25 to December 4 she had been a derelict, a plaything of sea and wind, and a hazard to other ships at sea.

Curiously enough, despite her severe buffeting, the little brigantine was still quite seaworthy, "capable of sailing around the world." A six months supply of food and potable water was aboard.

Eventually three Dei Gratia crewmen sailed the Mary Celeste to Gibraltar

Numerous theories have been advanced as to the fate of the ten people aboard the Mary Celeste, theories ranging from mutiny and murder to the sudden appearance of an island from the ocean depths which lured the crew to their death.

One theory proposed is that in traversing the raging Atlantic, the Mary Celeste kept her hatches closed. In passing from the frigid, blustery north to the balmy Azores, alcohol in the non-ventilated hold may have suddenly fumed upward.

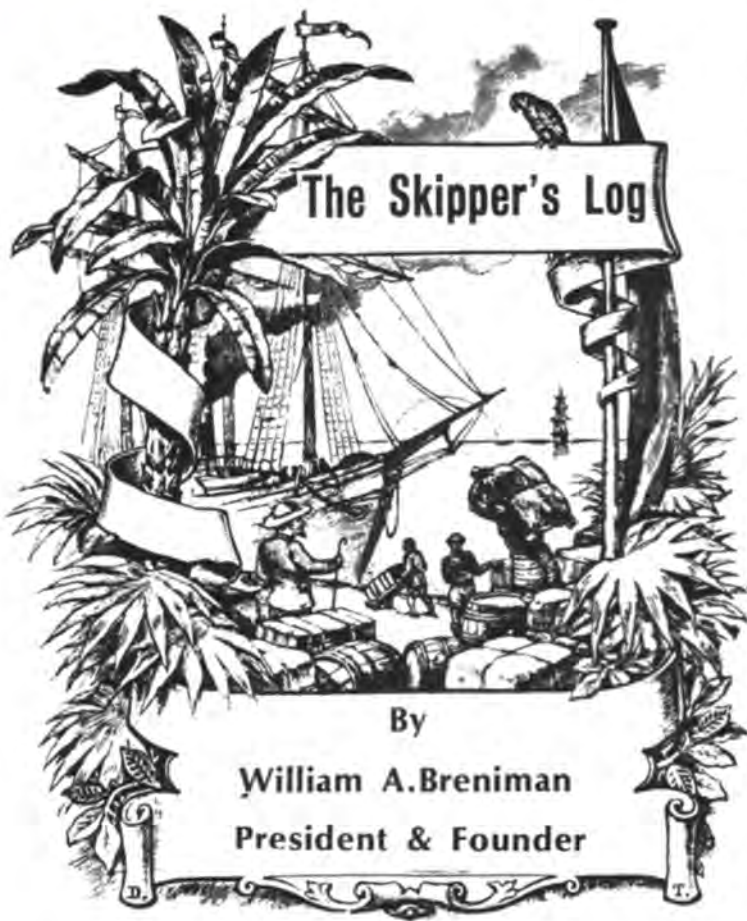
Confronted by imminent peril, fearing for the safety of his family and crew, the Mary Celeste's captain may have given an order to abandon ship.

Could it be that after leaving the ship, a violent squall, so characteristic of the Azores, may have swamped the small life boat and swept all into the sea?

More than nine decades have gone by since the crew and passengers of the Mary Celeste vanished into eternity, but the tragedy still grips the imagination. Despite the theories of writers and historians, the mystery of this wooden ship remains as unfathomable as the sea which swallowed up its ten victims.



"CLEARING THE HOOK"



The Skipper's Log

By
William A. Breniman
President & Founder

Our Wavelength is Brotherly Love

TO OUR MEMBERS: It seems that I am always working under pressure and trying to meet deadlines ... sometimes not too successful. However in wireless and radio - pressure is the name of the game and we should be used to it by now. It still bothers me more than most realize that there are not enough hours in the day to answer all the interesting correspondence from my wonderful friends. Some I pass on to Eb Cady, John Elwood, Herb Scott, Elmer Burgman, Fred Rosebury and others to answer and I appreciate the wonderful job they are doing. ● I made a 'pitch' in the last issue of the JOURNAL for volunteers - both in Chapters and HQ offices. I think all members realize that the 'life-blood' of any organization lies in the willingness - devotion and dedication of its members to keep it going and ours has the same requirements. It will shortly be time for a National election of officers. I was appointed chairman of an ad hoc committee at the Society's business meeting June 21 1979 to recommend a slate of candidates for our coming election. The committee includes Messrs. Eb Cady, Herb Scott and Jim Brown. Please mail your recommendations to me (including your own offer to volunteer) by Oct. 1 1979. Recognizing the need for help in our Chapters - we would also like the names of those who will volunteer as Chapter Officers. We are especially interested in those who might start chapters in areas where we do not have one established. ● You might wonder about my selection of the name ... "PQ-17" EDITION for this issue of the JOURNAL? Most are aware of "Pearl Harbor", Omaha Beach, Iwo Jima, etc., but few seem to be aware of the pure 'Hell' many of our members went through in the convoys of ships across the North Atlantic during WW2. The Story of one of our members who volunteered for this duty is recorded, starting on Page 12 of this issue. We owe Bill Smith and his brothers a deep debt of gratitude for their valient effort, courage and loyalty during this period when the German High Command, mandated the sinking of everything afloat. ● **CHANGES.** It was decided at the Business Meeting to change the name of this JOURNAL from "SPARKS JOURNAL" to "WIRELESS JOURNAL" (The Historical Journal of the Society of Wireless Pioneers, Inc.) Plans are to convert from a Quarterly to a Bi-monthly frequency of publication. That is one of the reasons your President needs to be relieved of a vast amount of record work and details incident to our operations. During the past month we have acquired the welcome services of a new "Girl Friday" who seems to be the answer to our prayers.

REPORT BUSINESS MEETING

REPORT ON
BUSINESS MEETING, JUNE 21
1979

Meeting was convened at 10AM on June 21 1979 as scheduled by President Wm. A Breniman. The meeting was held in Meeting Hall No. 1 at the El Rancho Inn at Millbrae, California.

Secretary Herbert Scott registered those attending which more than met the requirements of a quorum. We were quite happy that several officers and directors from distant areas were present, including VP, Awards Fernandez from Greenville, SC; Senior V.P. James H. Brown from Los Angeles; Chief Operator Oscar Harrison from Houston (Spring)TX; Chapter Director Paul Stevenson and wife Phyllis (Inland Seas Chapter Chicago area); Secretary Herbert Scott, Treasurer Lorin De Merritt. Telephone message of the Washington (Capital Area) Allen Bernal, Director was read. Eben K. Cady, VP Finance/Audits and Elmer Burgman, Librarian attended all sessions.

The meeting adjourned for a short lunch period, resumed and adjourned at 4.30PM HIGHLIGHTS TAKEN UP

1. A reorganizational chart of the Society was approved. This is basically to spread the work-load and relieve the current President of an impossible situation. This was passed and copy will appear in the coming Journal.
2. Election Procedures have been set-up with a 'nominations committee' which will provide details at an early date.

3. Changes in Constitution and By-Laws Necessary changes and rewording of the current C&BL will be worked up by President Breniman and reviewed by Judge James L. Brown at an early date (as soon as workload is reduced) The new proposed C&BL will be submitted to members.
4. **CHAPTERS.** Increased effort will be made to establish a new chapter in the New England area and to reactivate chapters in the Texas-Gulf Coast, and Florida areas. Effort will also be directed to the Inter-mountain and the Twin-cities areas.
6. **DUES.** Due to increasing cost of postage, printing, etc. The Directors have established dues @ \$10.00 per annum STARTING IN 1981. A rate of \$25.00 will be accepted for 3 years or initially \$25.00 for 1981-82-83. Those who have credits for these/or part of these years will have it apply on the \$25 rate.
7. **MEMBER LIFE SUSTAINING FEE** Starting in 1980 and for a ONE YEAR TRIAL EXPERIMENT LIFE-TIME dues will be accepted on the following basis for members who may wish to 'pay-up' for their life.
LIFE-FEE
\$ 25.00 Senior, SGP
\$ 50.00 SGP
\$100.00 "PIONEER" members
\$150.00 "VETERAN" Members
\$225.00 Regular Members & T.A.

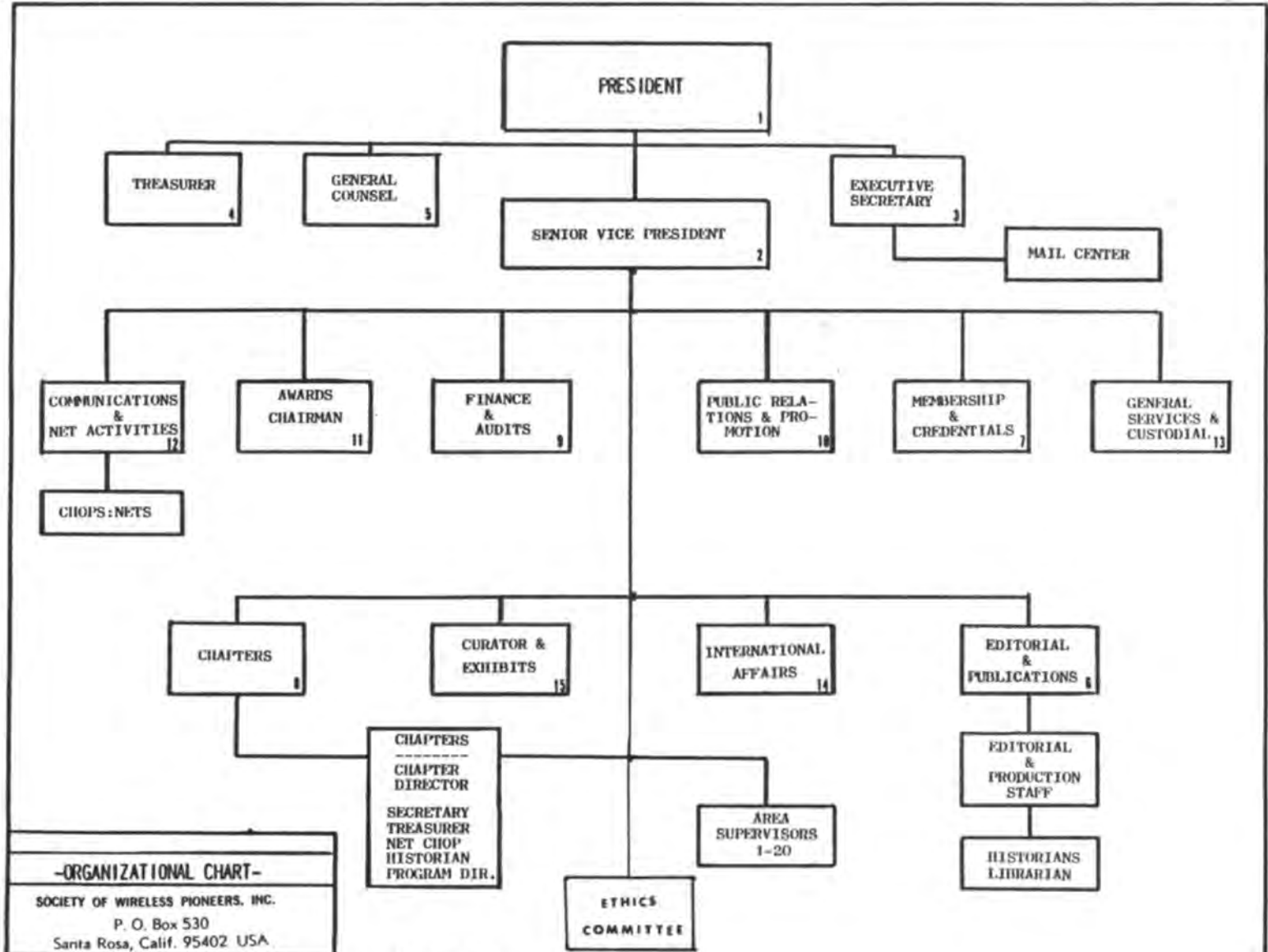
We hope to buy "T" Bills with the receipts to make the arrangement 'self-funding'. In case of unusual inflation rate, we will reserve the right to increase the rate to cover inflationary costs based on C/L index established by the Government.

8. LIBRARY - MODUS OPERENDI
The purpose and method of handling and cataloguing books, publications and Historical papers were discussed. The loan of material and responsibility of those who borrow was included. A catalogue of such material will be made available in the near future with published guide-lines relative its use.

9. MUSEUM & ARTIFACTS
We have definitely decided not to establish a museum to be operated by the Society. However, with the present amount of material and artifacts on hand with the potential of increasing the inventory of such material, we plan to use material on hand in exhibits the Society might wish to provide or for "Travelling Exhibits" where other established museums might wish to display Society owned objects in a wing or room, giving credit to the Society. A V.P. Curator/Exhibits will be established to handle.

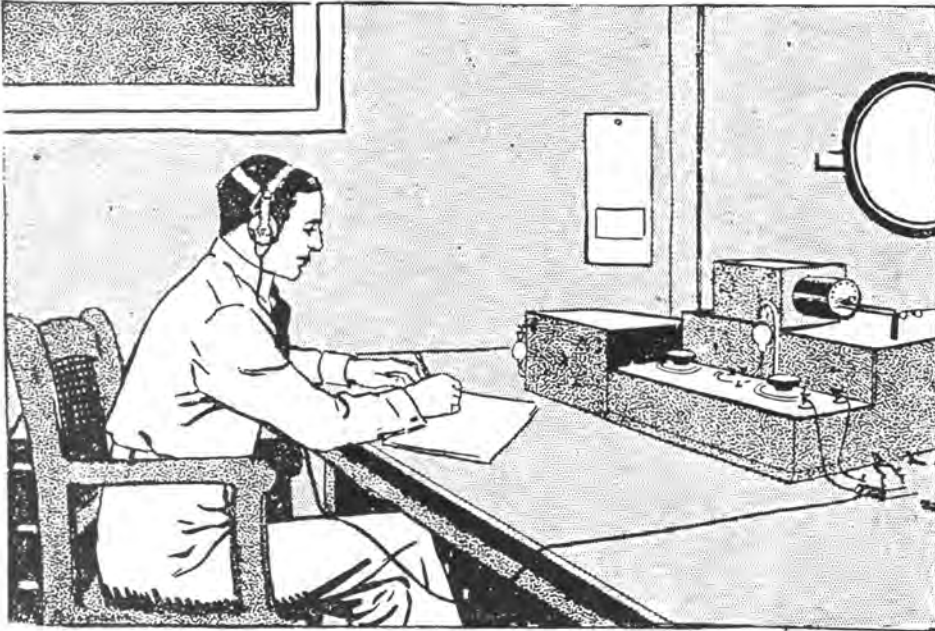
10. SLOP CHEST ITEMS
A new office (V.P. General Services & Custodial) will be set up to handle all such materials as now handled including OSL cards, etc. Also this office will be responsible for cataloging or the inventory (and responsibility of insuring or safeguarding) physical assets of the Society.

11. OTHER
Considerable time was spent in discussing the Status of the Society's NETS and their operations. CHOP OSCAR HARRISON used the meeting to obtain some ideas on the future of this function which provides an important method of many members to keep contact. V.P. EB CADY also discussed some of the FISCAL matters that concern the Society and its future programs. The main thrust was that of speeding up publications (now plan a Bi-Monthly WIRELESS JOURNAL (Journal of the Society of Wireless Pioneers). During the coming election President Breniman hopes to be relieved of the Presidency and to take over, at least for a period, the publishing to Society papers. Many other subjects and matters of interest to the Society were discussed but space prohibits covering them in detail. It was a very satisfactory meeting. Agenda subjects were covered in full and most problems were satisfactorily resolved.

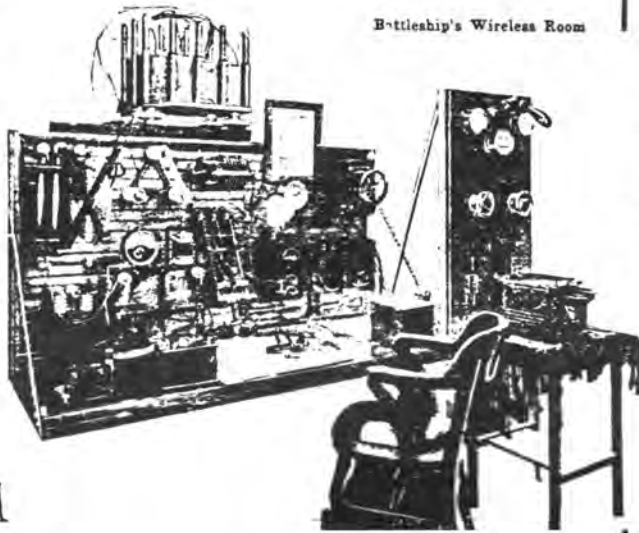
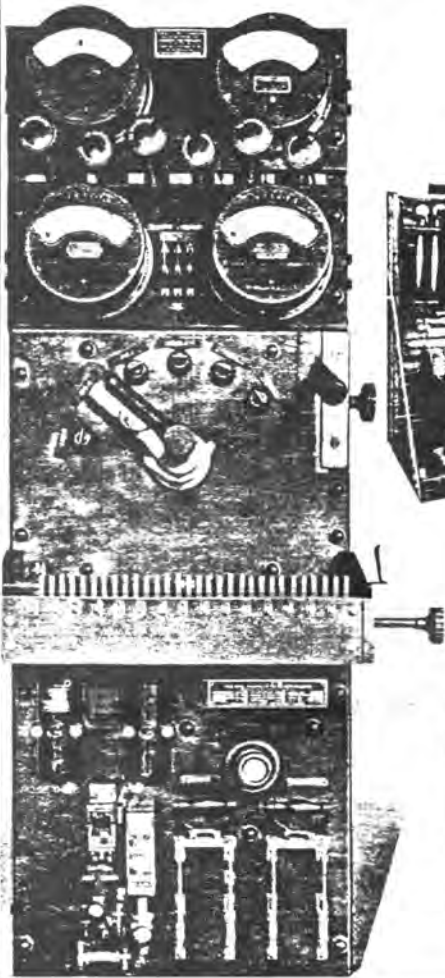


-ORGANIZATIONAL CHART-
SOCIETY OF WIRELESS PIONEERS, INC.
P. O. Box 530
Santa Rosa, Calif. 95402 USA.

'AL' WOODY'S SCRAP-BOOK

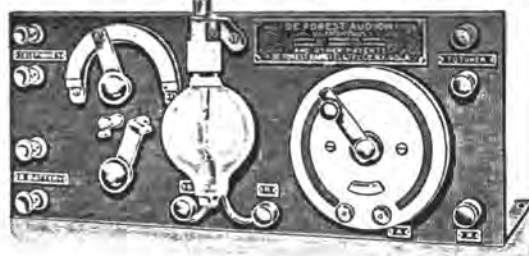


Preview of the Early Days scheduled in S. J



Battleship's Wireless Room

De Forest Audion Detectors



Type R.J9.

LIFE MEMBER

SOCIETY OF WIRELESS PIONEERS

Organization of the "Professional" Brass-Pounder

W7WQ

Albert L. Woody
539-SGP

402 Bjune Drive, S.E.,
Bainbridge Island,
Winslow, Washington 98110

ASSIGNMENTS

First Ship - 1920
SS. Lake Geysar/KULD
1921 - SS Crofton Hall/KLR
1923 - SS Puritan/WDU
SS Indiana/WFC
1924 - B/C Station Milw. Radio Show

The moving finger writes and having writ - moves on.

Rubiab of Omar Kyam



CODE ODE

by Troy Weidenheimer, WØROF

*It's more than dots and dashes,
It's a place.
A sanctuary for those who've learned
To love the mysterious magic of
Thoughts arriving in mile-long strings
On roads of ether or wire.*

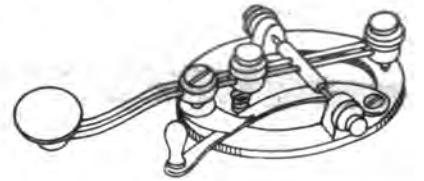
*Even more, it's peace,
A shield from the disordered sounds
Of traffic, angry people
And industrial clutter clatter,
Within its warm mantle
We find soothing respite.*

*And the patter of bright ideas it is,
The sharp focusing of others' thoughts
From miles beyond our vision's range,
As in a dream we sit so still,
It floats in our ears and stirs our minds
With concern, remembrance, speculation
And mirth.*

*And code is music,
From sounders and speakers it dances
In the shack to each sender's inner clock,
And comes butter-smooth, deliciously swinging,
Or choppy stacatto from a "fist" praising definition,
Or perfectly metered, flowing exquisitely
From the gentle hand of an artist.*

*A place,
And peace,
Intelligence and
Music.*

Code is more than dots and dashes.



★★★★★★★★ The "Wireless" - Our Proud Heritage! ★★★★★★★★★★

SOCIETY OF WIRELESS PIONEERS, INC.
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SANTA ROSA, CALIFORNIA 95402



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NEWSPAPER
SPARKS - JOURNAL

TO:

Newsletters from the Society of Wireless Pioneers, founded 1968
~ Dedicated to the History of Seagoing Wireless Operators ~

Special thanks to the following for these documents:
Key [SK = Silent Key, SGP = Spark Gap Pioneers, P = Pioneers,
V = Veteran, M = Member, Sparks = Worked at Sea]

(SK) Ed Raser, W2ZI, Radio Pioneer, Sparks, SOWP #35-SGP
(SK) Bill Gould, K2NP, Radio Pioneer, Sparks, SOWP #565-P
(SK) Matty Camillo, W2WB, Sparks, SOWP #750-SGP
(SK) Dare Robinson, WB2EVA, Sparks, SOWP #2284-SGP
(SK) Ray Brooks, K2LTX, Sparks, SOWP #1387-P
Olive Jesse Roeckner, VA6ERA, Sparks, SOWP #2891-V
Spud Roscoe, VE1BC, Sparks, SOWP #2301-M
David J. Ring, Jr., N1EA, Sparks, SOWP #3709-M
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